Living Arrangements of Children: 2001

Household Economic Studies

Issued July 2005

P70-104

Current Population Reports

By
Rose M. Kreider
and
Jason Fields

Introduction and Highlights

Children live in a variety of family arrangements that usually reflect the marriage, divorce, and remarriage patterns of their parents. In addition, one-third of children today are born out-of-wedlock and may grow up in single-parent families or spend significant portions of their lives with other relatives or stepparents.[1] This report examines the diversity of children's living arrangements in American households.[2] The data are from the household relationship module of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) collected in 2001 and update an earlier study from the 1996 SIPP panel of children growing up in various family situations.[3]

Detailed information was obtained on each person's relationship to every other person in the household, permitting the identification of various types of relatives and of parent-child and sibling relationships. This report describes extended family households with relatives and nonrelatives (whose presence may affect a child's development and contribute to the household's economic well-being). It also examines the degree to which children are living in single-parent families or with stepparents, adoptive parents, or no parents while in the care of another relative or guardian.

The statistics in this report are based on national-level estimates of children and their living situations from June through September 2001. The findings pertain to all individuals under age 18, regardless of their marital or parental status. The estimates represent data on the living arrangements for children averaged over this 4-month period.

Children are defined in this report as all individuals under 18 years old.

Adopted children are identified by the survey respondent alone and not from any administrative records.

Blended families are formed when remarriages occur or when children living in a household share only one or no biological parents. The presence of a stepparent, stepsibling, or half-sibling designates a family as blended.

An **extended family household** is a household where a child lives with at least one parent and someone other than a parent or siblings, either relatives or nonrelatives.

[1] "The Council of Economic Advisers on the Changing American Family," *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 2000, pp. 617-628.

[2] The data in this report were collected from June through September of 2001 in the second wave (interview) of the 2001 Survey of Income and Program Participation. The population represented (the population universe) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population under 18 living in the United States. Detailed tables for this report can be accessed on the Census Bureau Web site at <www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/child/la-child.html>.

[3] Jason Fields, *Living Arrangements of Children: 1996,* Current Population Reports, P70-74, Washington, DC, U.S. Census Bureau, 2001.

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

Helping You Make Informed Decisions

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Some major findings of this report include:

- In 2001, 72.5 million children under 18 lived in households. The majority of these children (51.1 million) lived with two parents. Three percent (2.1 million) of all children lived with two parents who were not married to each other.[4]
- Among the 18.5 million children living with only one unmarried parent, 2.2 million lived with their father.
- Of the 1.4 million children living in households with at least one adoptive parent, 44 percent lived with two adoptive parents.
- Fifteen percent of children (10.6 million) lived in blended families. About half of these children, 5.1 million, lived with at least one stepparent.
- 15.1 million children lived in households with no brothers or sisters present (21 percent).
- 6.2 million children lived with at least one grandparent, and 1.4 million of these children had no parent present.

Various factors influence the diversity of children's living arrangements, including parental death, divorce, remarriage, out-of-wedlock childbearing, cohabitation (of unmarried parents), and multigenerational families. Immigration may also influence the type of household and family in which children grow up, when families provide housing for their immigrant relatives and friends. This factor is evident in the living arrangements of Hispanic children, and Hispanics constitute a large component of new immigrants to the United States.[5] Cultural factors, demographic characteristics, and family formation patterns underlie differences in current and future family structure.[6]

In 2001, 71 percent of the 72.5 million children under age 18 lived in two-parent households, 26 percent lived in single-parent households, and the remaining 4 percent lived in households without either parent (Table 1 and Figure 1). A large majority of non-Hispanic White (78 percent) and Asian and Pacific Islander (83 percent) children lived with two parents, about twice as high as the proportion for Black children (40 percent) and well above the proportion for Hispanic children (69 percent). A much higher proportion of Black children than non-Hispanic White or Hispanic children lived with a single parent in 2001: 51 percent compared with 19 percent and 26 percent, respectively.

In 2001, 5.1 million children lived with at least one stepparent. In addition, 2.9 million lived with neither of their parents; this figure included 0.3 million children living with one or more foster parents. Relatives, usually grandparents, often cared for children who were living with neither parent.

Children Living With Two Parents: Biological, Step, and Adoptive

In 2001, of the 51.1 million children who lived with two parents, 88 percent (45.1 million) lived with their biological mother and biological father (Table 1). An additional 10 percent (4.9 million) lived with a biological parent and a stepparent, usually with a biological mother and a stepfather (4.1 million). About 2 percent of children living with two parents (1.1 million) lived with either two adoptive parents or a combination of an adoptive parent and a biological or a stepparent.

Families with stepparents or adoptive parents are an increasingly large component of two-parent families. In 2001, 5.4 million children lived with one biological parent and either a stepparent or adoptive parent—11 percent of all those living with two parents, statistically unchanged from 5.2 million in 1996 (10 percent), and up from 4.5 million in 1991 (9 percent).[7]

In 2001, 95 percent of Asian or Pacific Islander children lived with both biological parents, higher than any of the other groups shown in Table 1. Black children had the lowest percentage (82 percent).[8]

In 2001, 536,000 children lived with one adoptive parent and a non-adoptive parent (biological or step). Eighty-three percent of these children were living with their biological mother and an adoptive father; adoptive fathers often were, in all likelihood, initially stepfathers. Often, living arrangements of children are dichotomized by whether

[4] The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text, figures, and tables) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from the actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

[5] Because Hispanics may be any race, data in this report for Hispanics overlap with data for the White, Black, American Indian, and Asian populations. Based on the population under 18 in the 2001 SIPP, 20 percent of the White population, 6 percent of the Black population, 21 percent of the American Indian population, and 5 percent of the Asian population were also Hispanic.

[6] S. Philip Morgan et al., "Racial differences in household and family structure at the turn of the century," *American Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 98, January 1993, pp. 798-828.

[7] Stacy Furukawa, *The Diverse Living Arrangements of Children: Summer 1991,* Current Population Reports, P70-38, Washington, DC, U.S. Census Bureau, 1994.

[8] The percentage for Black children is not statistically different from the percentage for American Indians, which was 87 percent.

Table 1.
Children by Presence and Type of Parent(s) and Race and Hispanic Origin: 1996 and 2001

(Numbers in thousands)

Living arrangements	2001								1996, total
	Total		Race and Hispanic orgin						
	Number	Margin of error [1]	White	Non-Hispanic White	Black	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic (any race)	
Children	72,501	1,530	56,652	45,107	11,766	1,113	2,971	12,611	71,494
Living with —									
Two parents [2]	51,113	1,236	43,377	35,197	4,647	639	2,450	8,757	50,685
Married parents	48,987	1,206	41,886	34,246	4,169	535	2,397	8,148	49,186
Unmarried parents	2,126	228	1,491	951	478	104	53	610	1,499
Biological mother and father	45,103	1,148	38,431	31,055	3,791	557	2,324	7,869	44,708
Married parents	43,287	1,121	37,155	30,255	3,405	455	2,271	7,336	43,401
Biological mother and stepfather	4,050	316	3,306	2,702	620	65	59	689	3,723
Biological father and stepmother	815	141	712	620	84	-	19	92	1,004
Biological mother and adoptive father	445	104	374	342	59	9	4	31	479
Biological father and adoptive mother	56	37	56	51	-	-	-	5	37
Adoptive mother and father	605	121	465	397	88	7	44	68	702
Adoptive mother and stepfather	16	20	11	11	5	-	-	-	23
Adoptive father and stepmother	19	21	19	15	-	-	-	4	9
Stepmother and stepfather	4	10	4	4	-	-	-	-	-
One parent	18,472	697	11,610	8,723	6,007	398	457	3,322	18,165
Mother only	16,297	652	9,925	7,271	5,614	336	422	3,046	16,340
Biological	15,980	645	9,759	7,141	5,514	324	383	3,008	16,051
Father only	2,175	231	1,685	1,451	393	61	35	276	1,825
Biological	2,082	226	1,623	1,395	371	53	35	270	1,737
Neither parent	2,917	268	1,665	1,188	1,112	77	63	532	2,644
Grandparents only	1,407	185	726	530	617	43	20	213	1,266
Other relatives only	889	147	474	294	379	12	25	209	688
Nonrelatives only	520	112	389	311	94	19	18	87	622
Other arrangement	101	50	76	53	22	3	-	23	69
At least 1 biological parent	68,531	1,477	54,260	43,306	10,439	1,008	2,824	11,964	67,739
At least 1 stepparent	5,081	355	4,167	3,443	764	70	81	812	4,902
At least 1 adoptive parent	1,372	183	1,037	912	219	33	84	124	1,484
At least 1 foster parent	260	79	152	126	78	16	14	44	313

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

[1] This number, when added to or subtracted from the estimated total number of children under 18 in each category, represents the 90-percent confidence interval around the estimate.

[2] In the SIPP, children identify both of their parents regardless of their marital status. This means that both married and unmarried parents are included in this category in this table. This represents a difference from the CPS, where only married parents are recorded in two-parent households. As a result, there are more children in two-parent households in the SIPP, and more in single-parent households in the CPS.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel, Wave 2.

children live with only one or with both parents. The statistics in this report illustrate that even among children raised by two parents, considerable variation exists in the blending of parental types, whether biological, step, or adoptive parents.

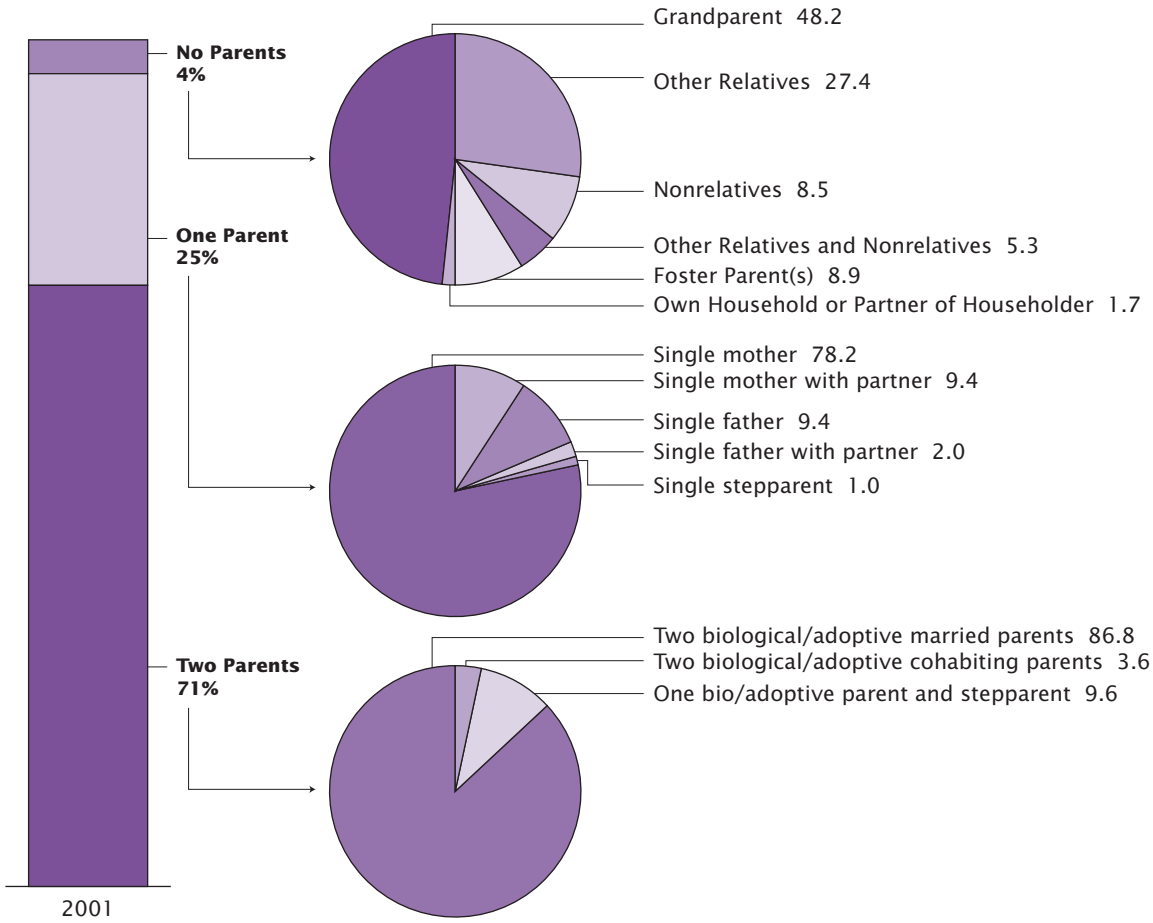
Children Living With Unmarried Parents

Numerous factors, including nonmarital childbearing, death, and divorce, affect whether children live with an unmarried parent for some portion of their childhood. A 1984 study estimated that almost half of children under 16 would live in a single-parent household at some time before reaching age 16.[9]

[9] Larry L. Bumpass, "Children and Marital Disruption: a Replication and Update," *Demography*: Vol. 21, No. 1, February 1984, pp. 71-82.

Figure 1.

Percentage of Children Ages 0–17 Living in Various Family Arrangements: 2001



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel, Wave 2.

Table 2 shows that in 2001, 20.6 million children (28 percent of all children) lived with one or two unmarried parents.

Seventy-nine percent of children with unmarried parents resided only with their mother (16.3 million). 2.2 million children (11 percent of children living with unmarried parents) lived with their father without their mother present, including 304,000 children who lived with their biological fathers who were cohabiting with an unmarried partner. If fathers who were cohabiting with the children's mothers are included (2.1 million), 4.3 million children lived with their unmarried fathers in 2001 (21 percent of children living with an unmarried parent).

The overall pattern of living arrangements of children with unmarried parents clearly indicates that women are the primary custodial parents of these children, and that these children usually have unmarried mothers living without a partner present. In the instances where children are living with their unmarried fathers, their mothers are usually also living with them.

In 2001, 18 percent of children lived in families that were below the poverty level. While one-tenth of children living with married parents were below the poverty level, this was the case for one-third of children living with neither parent or one or two unmarried parents. Among children living with 2 unmarried parents, 27 percent were living in poverty. Children living with their unmarried mother only were twice as likely to live in poverty (37 percent) as were children living with their unmarried father only (16 percent).

Table 2.
Children by Presence and Type of Parents by Poverty Status: 2001

(Numbers in thousands)

Living arrangements of children	Children		Percent of children below poverty level	
	Number	Percent	Estimate	Margin of error[1]
Total	**72,501**	**100.0**	**17.6**	**0.7**
Living with married parents	48,987	67.6	10.1	0.7
Living with neither parent	2,917	4.0	31.0	4.2
Living with an unmarried parent [2]	20,598	28.4	33.6	1.6
Living with unmarried mother and father	2,126	2.9	27.4	4.8
Living with unmarried mother only	16,297	22.5	36.7	1.9
Living with unmarried father only	2,175	3.0	16.4	3.9
Parent has an unmarried partner	3,889	5.4	31.2	3.7
Biological mother and father	1,817	2.5	28.0	5.2
Biological mother, step or adoptive father	279	0.4	21.9	12.2
Biological father, step or adoptive mother	30	0.0	(B)	(B)
Biological mother, partner	1,400	1.9	38.7	6.4
Biological father, partner	304	0.4	24.0	12.1
Step or adoptive parent, partner	59	0.1	(B)	(B)
Parent has no unmarried partner	16,709	23.0	34.2	1.8
Biological mother	14,580	20.1	36.4	2.0
Living with other adult relative [3]	3,183	4.4	25.3	3.8
Living with opposite-sex adult nonrelative [4]	362	0.5	31.2	12.0
Biological father	1,778	2.5	14.7	4.1
Living with other adult relative [3]	334	0.5	13.2	9.1
Living with opposite-sex adult nonrelative [4]	71	0.1	(B)	(B)
Stepparent or adoptive parent	351	0.5	38.5	12.8

B - Base less than 200,000.

[1] This number, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, represents the 90-percent confidence interval around the estimate.

[2] Unmarried includes married spouse absent, widowed, divorced, separated, and never married.

[3] The category other adult relative does not include siblings.

[4] Only includes adult nonrelatives who are not in the category "married spouse present."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel, Wave 2.

Parents by Type of Relationship With Their Coresident Children

Table 3 shows estimates of the number of parents with coresident children in 2001, by the type of relationship with their children. While 96 percent of the 37.1 million mothers with coresident children were living with biological children only, this structure was true for just 86 percent of the 29.1 million fathers with coresident children. A higher percentage of fathers than of mothers lived with both their biological and stepchildren and no other children (5 percent compared with 1 percent). The percentage of fathers who lived with their stepchildren only (4 percent) was also higher than that of mothers (1 percent). Fathers were more likely to live with any stepchildren (10 percent) or adopted children (4 percent) than were mothers, of whom 2 percent lived with any stepchildren, and 2 percent lived with any adopted children.

Children With Siblings

Seventy nine percent of children under 18 lived in households with one or more siblings (Table 4): 10 percent lived with a half-sibling, 1 percent with a stepsibling, and another 2 percent with an adopted sibling.[10] A larger proportion of children living with two parents had siblings (84 percent) than was the case for children living with their mother only (74 percent) or their father only (61 percent). Thirty-eight percent of children living with neither parent lived with siblings.

In 2001, 28.2 million children (39 percent) lived with only one

[10] Due to the way the data are collected, the identification of siblings depends in part on the presence of parents. When two siblings are living in the same household with no parents present, they may not be identified as siblings or in the correct category of siblings.

sibling; an additional 25.2 million lived with two or three siblings (35 percent).

Adopted Children

The number of adopted children rose from 1.1 million in 1991, to 1.4 million in 2001, a figure that is not statistically different from the 1996 estimate of 1.5 million.[11] The number of adopted children is difficult to estimate accurately. SIPP estimates rely on the relationships reported by the respondent—administrative records are not used. This collection method could miss some legalized adoptions and include informal adoptions where no legal adoption exists.

Because of the small number of adopted children and potential difficulties in counting them accurately in the SIPP, only basic information is presented in Table 5. In 2001, 17 percent of adopted children lived with a single parent, compared with 26 percent of all children. The majority (83 percent) of adopted children lived with two parents—44 percent lived with two adoptive parents, 37 percent lived with an adoptive parent and a biological parent, and 3 percent lived with an adoptive parent and a stepparent.[12] Children who live with an adoptive parent and a biological parent have likely been adopted by their stepparent. SIPP is one of the few sources of current data that can provide information about the proportion of adopted children who have been adopted by their stepparent rather than by a biological relative or someone who was previously unrelated to them.

Table 3.
Parents With Specified Types of Coresident Children: 2001

(Numbers in thousands. Types of coresident children of any age for parents with at least one coresident child under 18.)

Parent-child relationship	Number		Percent
	Estimate	Margin of error [1]	
Fathers	29,097	894	100.0
Biological children only	25,102	824	86.3
Stepchildren only	1,198	171	4.1
Adopted children only	496	110	1.7
Foster children only	28	26	0.1
Biological children and stepchildren only	1,574	196	5.4
Biological children and adopted children only	549	116	1.9
Other combinations	150	60	0.5
Any biological children	27,296	863	93.8
Any stepchildren	2,863	265	9.8
Any adopted children	1,149	167	3.9
Any foster children	98	49	0.3
Mothers	37,107	1,026	100.0
Biological children only	35,555	1,001	95.8
Stepchildren only	245	77	0.7
Adopted children only	373	95	1.0
Foster children only	65	40	0.2
Biological children and stepchildren only	497	110	1.3
Biological children and adopted children only	248	78	0.7
Other combinations	124	55	0.3
Any biological children	36,388	1,014	98.1
Any stepchildren	795	139	2.1
Any adopted children	688	129	1.9
Any foster children	147	60	0.4

[1] This number, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, represents the 90-percent confidence interval around the estimate.

Note: All of the parents in this table have at least one coresident child under 18. However, some also have coresident children who are 18 and older, and the type of relationship between the parent and these older children is also reflected in the table.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel, Wave 2.

Children in Blended Families

Blended families typically are formed when remarriages occur and parents enter the household accompanied by their children from previous unions, thus creating stepparents and stepsiblings among the children in the newly formed family. In other instances, blended families are formed when a remarried parent has a child with his or her new spouse, thus producing a new brother or sister who is a half-sibling to a child from a previous union.

Table 6 shows the proportion of children who were in blended families in 2001 by the child's race

[11] Stacy Furukawa, *The Diverse Living Arrangements of Children: Summer 1991*, Current Population Reports, P70-38, Washington, D.C., U.S. Census Bureau, 1994.
Jason Fields, *Living Arrangements of Children: 1996,* Current Population Reports, P70-74, Washington, DC, U.S. Census Bureau, 2001.
The Census 2000 estimate of the number of adopted children of the householder who were under 18 is not statistically different from the estimate of the number of adopted children under 18 in SIPP 2001.

[12] The percentage of adopted children who lived with two adoptive parents does not differ statistically from the percentage of adopted children who lived with one adoptive parent and one biological parent.

Table 4.
Children Living With Siblings by Type of Relationship and Presence of Parent: 2001

(Numbers in thousands)

Presence of siblings	Total			Two parents		Mother only		Father only		Neither parent	
	Number	Margin of error [1]	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Children	72,501	1,530	100.0	51,113	100.0	16,297	100.0	2,175	100.0	2,917	100.0
Living with at least one sibling	57,441	1,326	79.2	43,034	84.2	11,992	73.6	1,316	60.5	1,098	37.6
Living with only full siblings	48,476	1,198	66.9	36,320	71.1	10,044	61.6	1,175	54.0	937	32.1
Living with at least one stepsibling	948	152	1.3	659	1.3	151	0.9	61	2.8	77	2.6
Living with at least one adopted sibling	1,116	165	1.5	944	1.8	133	0.8	35	1.6	5	0.2
Living with at least one half-sibling	7,308	428	10.1	5,485	10.7	1,687	10.4	57	2.6	80	2.7
Living with —											
No siblings	15,060	625	20.8	8,078	15.8	4,304	26.4	858	39.4	1,819	62.4
1 sibling	28,165	878	38.8	20,888	40.9	5,908	36.3	765	35.2	605	20.7
2 siblings	18,242	692	25.2	13,837	27.1	3,731	22.9	409	18.8	265	9.1
3 siblings	6,944	417	9.6	5,206	10.2	1,534	9.4	84	3.9	120	4.1
4 or more siblings	4,089	318	5.6	3,103	6.1	819	5.0	59	2.7	109	3.7

[1] This number, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, represents the 90-percent confidence interval around the estimate.

Note: The child is under 18. Their siblings may be of any age.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel, Wave 2.

Table 5.
Adopted Children by Race and Hispanic Origin and Living Arrangements: 2001

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristics of children	Number		Percent
	Estimate	Margin of error [1]	
Adopted children	1,372	183	100.0
Race and Hispanic origin			
White	1,037	159	75.5
Non-Hispanic	912	149	66.5
Black	219	73	15.9
American Indian and Alaska Native	33	28	2.4
Asian and Pacific Islander	84	45	6.1
Hispanic (any race)	124	55	9.1
Living arrangements			
Two parents	1,140	167	83.1
Two adoptive parents	605	121	44.1
One adoptive and one biological	501	110	36.5
One adoptive and one step	35	29	2.5
One parent	233	75	16.9
Mother only	198	69	14.4
Father only	35	29	2.5

[1] This number, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, represents the 90-percent confidence interval around the estimate.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel, Wave 2.

and Hispanic origin.[13] Five percent of Asian children lived in blended families, compared with 15 percent of all children. Lower rates of out-of-wedlock childbearing and divorce may contribute to lower rates of Asian children living in blended families.[14]

[13] Table 6 differs in several ways from Table 4 in the report on *Living Arrangements of Children: 1996* that it updates. In 2001, adopted siblings were not included with stepsiblings as they were in 1996 and 1991, but were coded separately. An additional category for children living with one biological and one adoptive parent and siblings who are the child's step, adopted, or half-siblings is included. It is likely that these adopted children were first the stepchildren of their adoptive parent, and that the adoption took place following the remarriage of the biological parent with whom they live.

[14] See the *National Vital Statistics Reports* for data on births and trends in childbearing among unmarried women, teenagers, and the general population. For example, see Joyce A. Martin et al., *Births: Final Data for 2001*, National Vital Statistics Reports: Vol. 51, No. 2, Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2002.

Table 6.
Children Living in Blended Families by Composition of Family and Child's Race and Hispanic Origin: 2001

(Numbers in thousands)

Relationships in household	All races		White	Non-Hispanic White	Black	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic (any race)
	Estimate	Margin of error [1]						
Children	72,501	1,530	56,652	45,107	11,766	1,113	2,971	12,611
Children living in a blended family	10,574	518	8,287	6,640	1,942	193	152	1,797
Percent of all children	14.6	0.6	14.6	14.7	16.5	17.3	5.1	14.2
Type of blended family								
Number	10,574	518	8,287	6,640	1,942	193	152	1,797
Stepparent only	2,424	244	1,996	1,688	351	11	65	330
Stepsibling only	233	75	166	141	55	7	4	29
Half-sibling only	4,804	345	3,576	2,715	1,057	107	63	919
Stepparent and stepsibling	497	110	416	357	77	3	-	62
Stepparent and half-sibling	1,978	220	1,593	1,245	314	55	16	411
Stepsibling and half-sibling	26	25	16	11	9	-	-	6
Stepparent, stepsibling, and half-sibling	183	67	161	153	22	-	-	9
One biological parent and one adoptive parent, and step, adopted, or half-siblings	431	102	362	330	56	9	4	32
Percent	100.0	(X)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Stepparent only	22.9	2.0	24.1	25.4	18.1	(B)	(B)	18.4
Stepsibling only	2.2	0.7	2.0	2.1	2.8	(B)	(B)	1.6
Half-sibling only	45.4	2.4	43.2	40.9	54.4	(B)	(B)	51.1
Stepparent and stepsibling	4.7	1.0	5.0	5.4	4.0	(B)	(B)	3.5
Stepparent and half-sibling	18.7	1.9	19.2	18.8	16.2	(B)	(B)	22.9
Stepsibling and half-sibling	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	(B)	(B)	0.3
Stepparent, stepsibling, and half-sibling	1.7	0.6	1.9	2.3	1.1	(B)	(B)	0.5
One biological parent and one adoptive parent, and step, adopted, or half-siblings	4.1	0.9	4.4	5.0	2.9	(B)	(B)	1.8

- Represent zero or rounds to zero.

X - Not applicable.

B - Base less than 200,000.

[1] This number, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, represents the 90-percent confidence interval around the estimate.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel, Wave 2.

The largest type of blending in children's families is the presence of half-siblings. In 2001, 7.3 million children lived with at least one half-sibling (Table 4), representing 10 percent of all children and 69 percent of children in blended families.

Living with a stepparent is the next largest contributor to children living in a blended family—7 percent of all children and 48 percent of children in blended families lived with a stepparent. In blended families, stepparents were more commonly found living with non-Hispanic White children (52 percent) than with Black children or Hispanic children (each about 40 percent).

Children With Grandparents

In 2001, 6.2 million children lived in households with at least one grandparent present (9 percent of all children, Table 7). Twelve percent of Hispanic children and 15 percent of Black children lived with a grandparent, while 5 percent of non-Hispanic White children lived with a grandparent.[15]

[15] The percentage of Asian children and American Indian children who lived with a grandparent (15 percent) was not statistically different from the percentage of Black children who lived with a grandparent.

The arrangements when grandparents and grandchildren live in the same household vary, such as whether the parents are present and which generation maintains the household. In 2001, 77 percent of children living with a grandparent were also living with a parent in the household, and 55 percent of children living with a parent and grandparent were in a household where their grandparent was the householder. This characteristic differs by the number of parents. Thirty percent of children living with a grandparent and two parents were living in households

Table 7.
Children Below the Poverty Level by Presence of Parents and Grandparents, Race and Hispanic Origin: 2001

(Numbers in thousands)

Living arrangements	All races		White	Non-Hispanic White	Black	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic (any race)
	Estimate	Margin of error [1]						
Children	72,501	1,530	56,652	45,107	11,766	1,113	2,971	12,611
Children living with at least one grandparent	6,187	393	3,839	2,398	1,737	168	444	1,561
Percent of all children	8.5	0.5	6.8	5.3	14.8	15.1	14.9	12.4
PRESENCE OF PARENTS								
Two parents	2,059	225	1,538	857	191	55	275	695
Grandparent is householder	613	122	476	244	44	29	64	240
Mother only	2,464	246	1,389	884	861	70	145	595
Grandparent is householder	1,843	212	1,091	718	626	49	77	437
Father only	256	79	186	126	68	-	3	59
Grandparent is householder	180	66	129	99	52	-	-	30
Neither parent	1,407	185	726	530	617	43	20	213
Grandparent is householder	1,341	181	692	511	596	41	12	199
PERCENT OF CHILDREN BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL								
All children	17.6	0.7	14.6	11.6	31.6	30.1	14.9	26.4
Two parents	10.8	0.7	10.2	7.6	13.9	21.6	12.4	21.6
Mother only	36.7	1.9	32.5	28.5	44.3	45.1	27.3	43.0
Father only	16.4	3.9	13.7	14.4	24.4	(B)	(B)	10.1
Neither parent	31.0	4.2	22.7	23.7	43.8	(B)	(B)	20.1
Children living with grandparents	22.9	2.6	18.0	16.7	33.0	(B)	20.3	20.3
Two parents	14.4	3.8	14.2	8.5	B	(B)	B	21.9
Mother only	23.5	4.2	19.3	19.1	28.3	(B)	23.4	18.3
Father only	16.0	11.3	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
Neither parent	35.5	6.3	24.0	25.8	48.6	(B)	(B)	23.0
Children living in grandparent's household	25.6	3.4	19.7	21.2	36.1	32.8	23.5	17.5
Two parents	14.4	7.0	14.5	13.1	(B)	(B)	(B)	15.4
Mother only	23.3	4.8	19.2	20.5	28.4	(B)	(B)	16.7
Father only	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
Neither parent	35.9	6.5	24.7	26.8	48.5	(B)	(B)	(B)
Children not living with grandparents	17.1	0.7	14.3	11.3	31.3	28.9	14.0	27.3
Two parents	10.6	0.7	10.1	7.6	14.1	21.4	11.9	21.6
Mother only	39.0	0.2	34.6	29.8	47.2	44.2	29.2	49.0
Father only	16.5	4.2	13.4	14.0	26.1	(B)	(B)	9.2
Neither parent	26.7	5.6	21.7	22.1	37.8	(B)	(B)	18.2

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

B - Base less than 200,000.

[1] This number, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, represents the 90-percent confidence interval around the estimate.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel, Wave 2

maintained by the grandparent, while 75 percent of children living with a single mother and a grandparent were living in the grandparent's household.[16] Among children living in households with grandparents but no parents present (23 percent of all children living with grandparents), the grandparent was the householder 95 percent of the time.

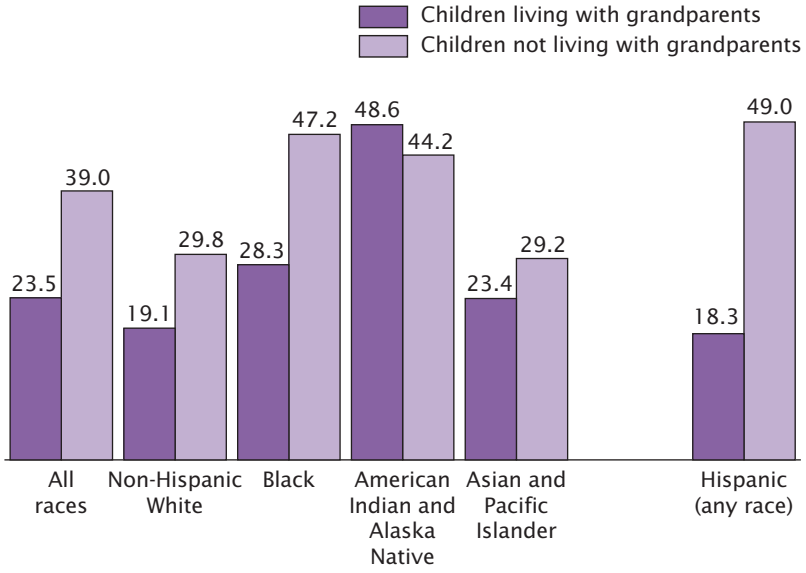
Children living with grandparents were more often living in families in poverty than were children living in households with no grandparents present (23 percent and 17 percent, respectively). The relationship between children's residence with their grandparent and their poverty level is not simple. A grandchild may live with a grandparent to alleviate financial hardship of a parent, or, alternatively,

[16] The percentage of children living with single fathers was not statistically different from that of children living with single mothers with respect to whether a grandparent was the householder.

of the grandparent. Among children living with their mother only, those living in households with a grandparent present were in poverty 24 percent of the time, less than the percentage of children living with a single mother and no grandparent present (39 percent—Figure 2).

Figure 2.

Percentage of Children Below the Poverty Level, for Those Living With Mother Only, by Presence of Grandparents and the Child's Race and Hispanic Origin: 2001[1]



[1]These children do not have a father present in the household.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2001 Panel Wave 2.

Relatives in Extended Families

Table 8 presents data on the different types of relatives living with children. (The estimates of specific relationship categories are not mutually exclusive—i.e., a person living with a grandmother, an uncle, and an aunt is counted separately in each of those categories.[17]) The largest group of children living with an other relative were living with a grandparent—6.2 million children were living with one or both grandparents. Other relatives was the next largest category, which includes more distant relatives and responses that lacked enough specificity to be classified into more distinct categories. Similar to 1991 and 1996, uncles and aunts were represented in similar proportions (4 percent and 3 percent, respectively), as were nieces and nephews (1 percent each).

Children Whose Coresident Parent's Marital Status Changed in the Last Year

Because the marital history of the child's coresident parents is collected in the SIPP, it is possible to estimate the number of children who lived with a parent who married, divorced, or was widowed in the last year. Table 9 shows that about 2.3 million children experienced the marriage of their coresident mother or father in the last year. For 836,000 of these children, their biological father and mother married each other, and both were still living with the child at the time of the survey.

Estimates of the number of children whose parents divorced during a year were previously tracked by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) as part of its vital statistics program. Currently, NCHS does not receive information from enough states to make these estimates. Previous NCHS data estimated that the number of children affected by divorce had grown since 1950. Divorce rates increased in the late 1970s and into the 1980s and subsequently leveled off in the late 1980s and into the 1990s.[18] An estimated 299,000 children were involved in the divorces finalized in 1950, or a rate of 6.3 per 1,000 children. This number increased to a little over one million children by 1972 (at a rate of 14.7 per 1,000 children), and stayed just over one million through 1984, when the rate was a bit higher, at 17.2 per 1,000 children.

Table 9 shows an estimated 1.5 million children experienced the divorce of their parents in the

[17] Among the three subcategories of grandparents in Table 8, however, a child is tabulated in only one of these categories.

[18] Kathryn A. London, 1989, *Children of Divorce*. Vital and Health Statistics. Series 21, No. 46. DHHS Pub. No. (PHS) 89-1924, National Center for Health Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. GPO.
Joshua R. Goldstein, "The Leveling of Divorce in the United States," *Demography*, Vol. 36(1999), pp. 409-414.

Table 8.
Children Living With Relatives by Type of Relative, Presence of Parents, and Whether Below Poverty Level: 2001

(Numbers in thousands)

Living arrangements	Total		No parent present				Parent present [1]			
					In poverty				In poverty	
	Estimate	Margin of error [2]	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	**72,501**	**1,530**	**2,917**	**100.0**	**903**	**31.0**	**69,584**	**100.0**	**11,856**	**17.0**
Presence of other relatives and nonrelatives [3]	13,851	598	2,782	95.4	867	31.2	11,070	15.9	2,772	25.0
Other relatives only	9,839	499	2,031	69.6	715	35.2	7,809	11.2	1,705	21.8
Other relatives and nonrelatives	895	148	231	7.9	86	37.2	665	1.0	232	34.9
Nonrelatives only	3,117	277	520	17.8	66	12.7	2,596	3.7	835	32.2
Foster parent(s)	260	79	260	8.9	20	7.7	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
SPECIFIC CATEGORY OF RELATIVE [4]										
Living with grandparent(s)	6,187	393	1,407	48.2	500	35.5	4,780	6.9	918	19.2
Grandmother and grandfather	2,411	243	676	23.2	173	25.6	1,735	2.5	253	14.6
Grandmother only	3,231	282	662	22.7	315	47.6	2,569	3.7	612	23.8
Grandfather only	545	115	69	2.4	12	(B)	476	0.7	52	10.9
Uncle	2,510	248	289	9.9	78	27.0	2,221	3.2	479	21.6
Aunt	2,195	232	271	9.3	68	25.1	1,924	2.8	477	24.8
Nephew	553	116	70	2.4	23	(B)	483	0.7	108	22.4
Niece	592	120	59	2.0	19	(B)	533	0.8	118	22.1
Brother-in-law	76	43	13	0.4	3	(B)	63	0.1	8	(B)
Sister-in-law	115	53	30	1.0	2	(B)	84	0.1	25	(B)
Other relative	3,806	306	1,199	41.1	388	32.4	2,608	3.7	704	27.0

X - Not applicable.

B - Base less than 200,000.

[1] Parents include biological, step, and adoptive parents.

[2] This number, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, represents the 90-percent confidence interval around the estimate.

[3] The child's parents, siblings, and children are not included in other relatives.

[4] These categories are independent and not mutually exclusive.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel, Wave 2.

year prior to the SIPP interview in 2001, or a rate of 20.6 per 1,000 children. Eighty percent of these children lived with their mother (1.2 million).

Composition of Households Containing Children: 2001

While most of the tables in this report are shown from the child's point of view, Table 10 shows the living arrangements of children at the household level. In 2001, 38.8 million households included children under 18: 97 percent had at least one child and his or her biological parent, 8 percent had at least one child and his or her stepparent, and 3 percent had at least one child and his or her adoptive parent. These categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, households can have children with both a biological parent and a stepparent. There were 3.6 million households with blended families, and 1.5 million households with adoptive families.

Eight percent of households with children under 18 (3.2 million) had three generations present, with 90 percent of these composed of a child, his or her parent(s), and the child's grandparent(s). An additional 2 percent, or 898,000, included a child and his or her grandparent(s), but not the child's parent(s). Nearly 1 in 5 households with children included nonrelatives or relatives of the child other than his or her parents or siblings.

While 14 percent of all households were below the poverty level, the percentages for blended households and households containing a

child and his or her stepparent were lower, at about 10 percent. This difference likely reflects the fact that stepfamilies are often formed by remarriage, so these households are more likely to have two parents and two earners than households with children and biological parents, which include single parents. Households in which children lived without a parent present had a poverty rate of 27 percent, double the overall poverty rate for households with children. Twenty-nine percent of households with children, their grandparent(s), and no parent(s) were below the poverty level.[19]

Overall, 37 percent of households with children received some type of public assistance (Table 10).[20] A higher percentage of three-generation households and extended households received public assistance (about 65 percent). Among extended households, 80 percent of those that included children living with other relatives and nonrelatives received public assistance.

Table 9.
Children Whose Coresident Parent's Marital Status Changed in the Last Year: 2001

(Numbers in thousands)

Marital Event	Number		Percent
	Estimate	Margin of error [1]	
Children living with their mother [1]	67,409	1,462	100.0
Mother had marital event in the last year	2,781	261	4.1
Mother married in last year	1,601	198	2.4
First marriage	1,009	157	1.5
Married the child's biological father and still married	836	143	1.2
Average age of the child (in years)	3.9	(X)	(X)
Mother divorced in last year	1,193	171	1.8
Divorce from first marriage	891	147	1.3
Mother moved in the last year	460	106	0.7
Mother widowed in last year	105	50	0.2
Children living with their father [1]	53,288	1,267	100.0
Father had marital event in the last year	1,835	212	3.4
Father married in last year	1,523	193	2.9
First marriage	1,093	163	2.1
Married the child's biological mother and still married	836	143	1.6
Average age of the child (in years)	3.9	(X)	(X)
Father divorced in last year	298	85	0.6
Divorce from first marriage	260	79	0.5
Father moved in the last year	83	45	0.2
Father widowed in last year	32	28	0.1

X - Not applicable.

[1] All of the children in the table live with at least one parent—biological, step, or adoptive.

Note: Separation cannot be adequately measured for inclusion in this table.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel, Wave 2.

Historical Trends

Today's family and household structures may be placed in an historical context by comparing them with family and household structures since the late 19th century. Based on decennial censuses for 1880, 1910, and 1940 using data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, the 1970 and 1990 Current Population Survey, and the 1996 and 2001 SIPP, Figure 3 presents long-term trends in parent-child living arrangements.[21]

The data from 1880 to 1970 at 30-year intervals (the approximate length of a generation most closely conforming to census years), show that the distribution of children's living arrangements changed little. The proportion of children who lived without parents declined from 6 percent in 1880 to about 3 percent in 1970. During this same period, the proportion of children who lived with their mothers only increased from 8 percent to 11 percent. Between 83 percent and 85 percent of children lived with two parents during this entire period.

Major shifts in living arrangements occurred between 1970 and 1990, when the proportion of children living only with their mother doubled from 11 percent to 22 percent. Since 1990, the changes in children's living arrangements have leveled off. The proportion of children living with only their fathers increased from 1970 to 1990, to levels that do not differ much from those recorded 100 years ago.

[19] The percentage of households in which children lived without a parent present that were in poverty did not differ statistically from the percentage of households with children, their grandparent(s), and no parent(s) that were in poverty.

[20] Cash and noncash public assistance are included. Noncash benefits include food stamps; The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children; Medicaid; rent for public housing; lower rent due to government subsidy; energy assistance; and free or reduced-price lunches or breakfasts.

[21] Steven Ruggles and Matthew Sobek et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 2.0, Minneapolis: Historical Census Projects, University of Minnesota, 1997. <www.ipums.umn.edu>. See Internet Table 2 <www.census.gov/population/socdemo/child/p70-104/tab02.pdf> for additional years of data not included in Figure 3. For 1880-1940, children in group quarters are included (1 percent or less of all children).

Table 10.
Composition of Households With Children: 2001

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Households with children under 18			Percent of households below the poverty level [2]	Percent of households receiving means tested benefits [3]
	Number		Percent		
	Estimate	Margin of error [1]			
Households with children under 18	38,815	521	100.0	13.5	37.0
Households containing —					
Parent and child present [4]	37,503	517	96.6	13.0	36.1
No parent of child	1,312	119	3.4	27.4	63.5
Biological parent, biological child present	36,930	515	95.1	13.0	36.0
Stepparent, stepchild present	3,148	183	8.1	9.6	37.1
Adoptive parent, adopted child present	1,301	118	3.4	12.9	35.7
Foster parent, foster child present	156	41	0.4	(B)	(B)
Blended household (stepchild, stepparent, half-sibling or stepsibling present) [5]	3,631	196	9.4	9.3	38.0
Adoptive household (adoptive parent, adopted child, or adopted siblings) [6]	1,467	126	3.8	12.5	37.2
Three-generation households	3,172	183	8.2	15.6	64.9
Child, grandparent present, parent(s) present	2,847	174	7.3	14.7	63.5
Child, grandparent present, no parent(s) present	898	99	2.3	29.2	72.9
Extended households [7]	7,082	269	18.2	19.3	63.7
Other relatives only	4,987	228	12.8	19.1	64.6
Other relatives and nonrelatives	324	59	0.8	25.6	79.3
Nonrelatives only	1,771	138	4.6	18.7	58.1

Note: Except for "Parent and child present" plus "No parent of child," percents may add to more than 100 percent since categories are not mutually exclusive.

B - Base less than 200,000.

[1] This number, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, represents the 90-percent confidence interval around the estimate.

[2] Based on the poverty status of the householder.

[3] This includes cash and noncash benefits. Noncash benefits include food stamps, WIC, Medicaid, rent for public housing, lower rent due to government subsidy, energy assistance, and free or reduced-price lunches or breakfasts.

[4] Includes biological, step, adoptive, and foster parents of children under 18.

[5] These households include a stepparent and stepchild. The stepchild may be any age; however, at least one child under 18 is in the household.

[6] These households include an adoptive parent and adopted child. The adopted child may be any age; however, at least one child under 18 is in the household.

[7] Extended households include those which contain a child under 18 who has a relative who is not his or her parent or sibling, or has a nonrelative present.

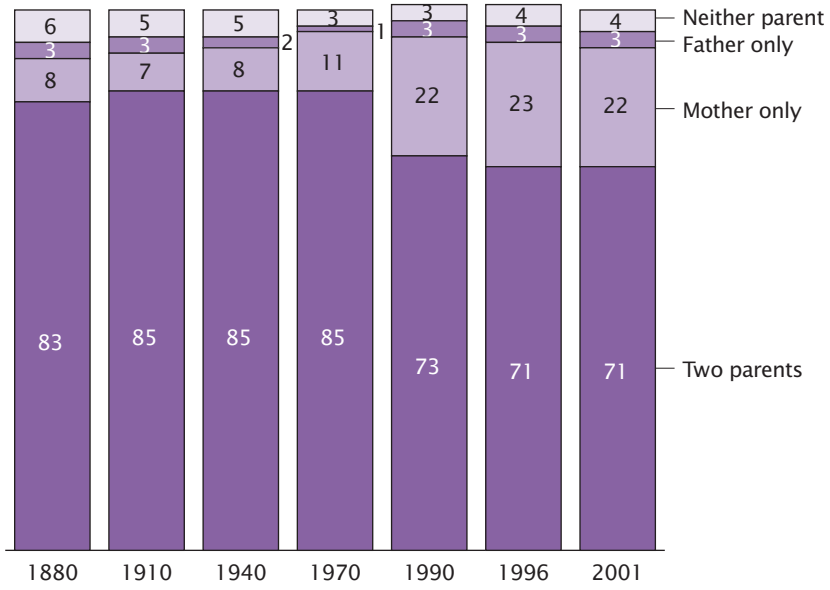
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel, Wave 2.

Source of the Data

The population represented (the population universe) in the 2001 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. The institutionalized population, which is excluded from the population universe, is composed primarily of the people in correctional institutions and nursing homes (91 percent of the 4.1 million institutionalized people in Census 2000).

The data in this report were collected from June through September of 2001 in the second wave (interview) of the 2001 SIPP. The data highlighted in this report come primarily from the main survey and the household relationship topical module. The SIPP is a longitudinal survey conducted at 4-month intervals. Although the main focus of the SIPP is information on labor force participation, jobs, income, and participation in federal assistance programs, information on other topics is also collected in topical modules on a rotating basis.

Figure 3.
Historical Living Arrangements of Children: Selected Years: 1880 to 2001
(Percent distribution)



Note: Some percentages do not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.
Source: 1880-1940: Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 2.0 made available by the Historical Census Projects; 1970-1990: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey; 1996-2001: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2. For 1880-1940, children in group quarters are included (1 percent or less of all children).

Accuracy of the Data

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. This means the 90-percent confidence interval for the difference between the estimates being compared does not include zero. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately the answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process, including the overall design of surveys, the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports to minimize these errors.

The Survey of Income and Program Participation weighting procedure uses ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but biases may still be present when people who are missed by the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. How this weighting procedure affects other variables in the survey is not precisely known. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on the source of the data and accuracy of the estimates including standard errors and confidence intervals, go to <www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A-2_SIPP2001_w1tow9_20050214.pdf> or contact Dennis Sissel of the Census Bureau's Demographic Statistical Methods Division on the Internet at *charles.d.sissel@census.gov.*

Additional information on the SIPP can be found at the following Web sites: <www.sipp.census.gov/sipp> (main SIPP Web site), <www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/workpapr/wp230.pdf>, (SIPP Quality Profile), and <www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/usrguide/sipp2001.pdf> (SIPP User's Guide).

More Information

A copy of this report along with detailed tables is available on the Census Bureau Web site at: <www.census.gov>. Children's data can be accessed by clicking on the "C" in the "Subjects A-Z" index, selecting "Children" and then "Living Arrangements of Children."

Suggested Citation

Kreider, Rose M. and Jason Fields. 2005. *Living Arrangements of Children: 2001.* Current Population Reports, P70-104. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC.

Contacts

For additional living arrangements or children's family information, you may contact the Fertility and Family Statistics Branch, on 301-763-2416. You may also contact the authors of this report by e-mail.

Rose Kreider:
rose.kreider@census.gov

Jason Fields:
jason.m.fields@census.gov

User Comments

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of users of its data and reports. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

Chief, Population Division
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

or send an e-mail inquiry to:
pop@census.gov

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
Washington, DC 20233

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Penalty for Private Use $300