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At Grandmother's House We Stay

One-in-Ten Children Are Living with a Grandparent

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At Grandmother's House We Stay

One-in-Ten Children Are Living with a Grandparent

By Gretchen Livingston

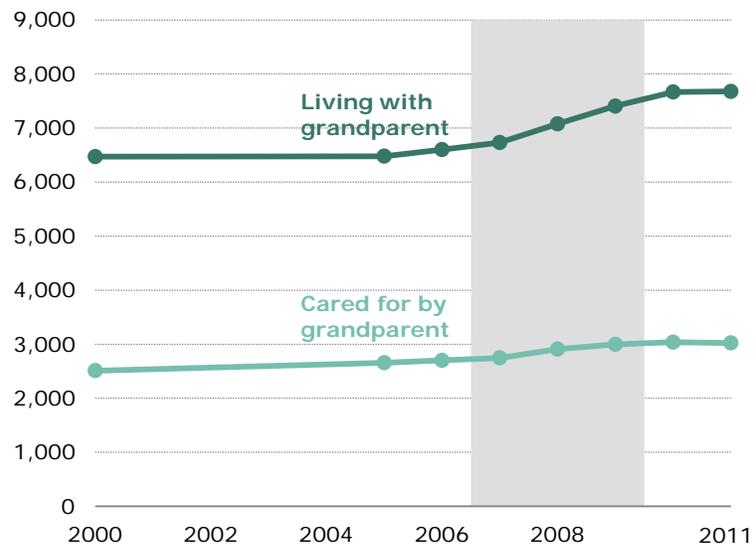
In 2011, 7.7 million children in the U.S.—one-in-ten—were living with a grandparent, and approximately 3 million of these children were also being cared for primarily by that grandparent.¹

Both of these numbers rose rapidly after the onset of the recession in 2007 and have stabilized since 2009, when the recession officially ended, according to a new Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.

In most cases (71%), grandchildren living with a grandparent are actually living in the grandparent's household. This share rises to 94% among those children who are also being cared for primarily by a grandparent.

Grandchildren Living with and Cared for Primarily by Grandparents Rises then Levels Off

Number of children, in thousands



Notes: The shaded area represents the Great Recession. Those “Cared for by grandparent” include those whose co-resident grandparent reports being currently responsible for most of the basic needs of a co-resident grandchild.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2000 Decennial Census and 2005-2011 American Community Survey Integrated Public Use Micro Samples (IPUMS)

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¹ Based on cases where a minor child is living with a grandparent who is a household head, spouse of the head, or parent or parent-in-law of the head. When the co-resident grandparent also reports that they are “currently responsible for most of the basic needs of their [co-resident] grandchildren under the age of 18”, it is assumed that the child is cared for primarily by a grandparent, as well.

Children who are cared for primarily by a grandparent are more likely to be living below the poverty line (28% versus 17%) and have lower median household income (\$36,000 versus \$48,000) than children who are not being cared for primarily by a grandparent.

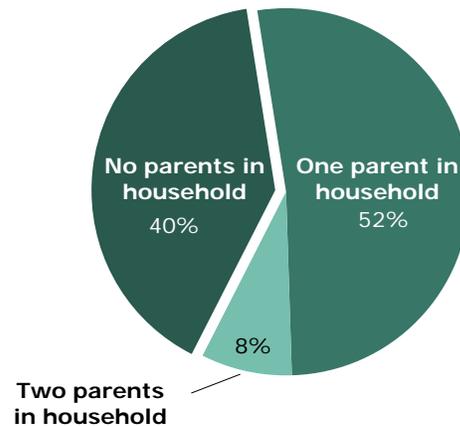
In 80% of the cases where children are living with a grandparent, at least one of the child's parents is also in the household. And in more than half of the cases where children are both living with a grandparent and being cared for primarily by that grandparent, at least one of the child's parents is also present.² Some 52% of children are living with one parent in addition to a grandparent caregiver, and an additional 8% are living with two parents.

Many of the parents in these households have characteristics suggestive of the need for family assistance. For example, 44% had a baby as a teen, and 12% have a disability. One-fifth (21%) are unemployed, 29% lack a high school diploma and 22% are currently enrolled in school.

Data used in this report are derived from the 2000 decennial Census, as well as the 2005-2011 American Community Surveys (ACS). These datasets are nationally representative of the U.S. population. The report is divided into three main sections: the first focuses on the characteristics of children living with grandparents, and being cared for primarily by grandparents; the second focuses on the characteristics of those parents whose co-resident child is being cared for primarily by a grandparent; and the third section discusses the characteristics of grandparents who live with their grandchildren, and grandparents who are the primary caregivers for their co-resident grandchildren.

Most Children with Grandparent Caregiver Also Live with a Parent

% among children with grandparent caregiver in 2011



Notes: Children with a grandparent caregiver are those whose co-resident grandparent reports being currently responsible for most of the basic needs of a co-resident grandchild.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of American Community Survey (IPUMS)

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² Self-reports of caregiving for grandchildren are available in the data, but reports on the amount of child caregiving provided by co-resident parents are not.

Other findings include:

Grandchildren

- Among racial and ethnic groups, black children are the most likely to be cared for primarily by a grandparent—8% are, compared with 4% of Hispanics, 3% of whites, and 2% of Asian children.
- Among those children being cared for primarily by a grandparent, the plurality (39%) are white, while 26% are black, 25% Hispanic and 3% Asian.
- About half (51%) of black children being cared for primarily by a grandparent are also living with at least one parent. This share rises to 61% for whites, 66% for Hispanics and 84% for Asians being cared for primarily by a grandparent.
- Children younger than 6 are more likely than older children to live with or be cared for by a grandparent: 14% of those below age 6 are co-residing with a grandparent, and 6% are being cared for by a grandparent. Among older children, about 9% are living with a grandparent, and 4% are being cared for primarily by a grandparent.

Grandparents

- Some 7 million grandparents are living with a grandchild—an increase of 22% from 2000, when fewer than 6 million grandparents were living with a grandchild.
- Among co-resident grandparents, roughly four-in-ten (39%) are also serving as the primary caregiver to a grandchild in the household.
- Most (55%) of these grandparent caregivers have had this responsibility for three years or more. This is particularly common among black grandparent caregivers—61% have cared for a grandchild for at least three years.
- Fully half (51%) of grandparent caregivers are white, 22% are black, 20% are Hispanic, and 3% are Asian. Among the population ages 50 and older, a much larger share—76%—is white, and smaller shares are black (10%) and Hispanic (9%). Asians comprise 4%.³
- One-fifth (22%) of grandparent caregivers are living below the poverty line. This share is just 10% among the full population ages 50 and older.

The sharp increase in the number of grandchildren living with their grandparents, and in some cases being cared for by them, during the recession mirrors other trends in family and household structure that have emerged since 2007 as apparent strategies to [gird against financial hardship](#).

³ Those ages 50 years and older are a rough proxy for the population of grandparenting age.

A recent [Pew Research Center analysis](#) identifies recent increases in the share of young adults living in their parents' homes, due in part to declines in employment, increases in college enrollment and postponement of marriage. Some of these young adults are avoiding moving away from home altogether, and some are "boomerang kids" who have returned to their childhood homes during the economic hard times of recent years. Pew Research has also documented general [increases in multi-generational](#) households and [declines in fertility](#) that accelerated after the onset of the recession. Other researchers have pointed to [increases in cohabitation](#) that have occurred in recent years as well.

Post-recession analyses are not yet available for all of these trends, but just as the number of grandchildren living with and being cared for primarily by grandparents leveled off after rising rapidly during the recession, fertility rate declines are also stabilizing, after plummeting. Conversely, the share of young adults living with their parents has continued to grow despite the end of the recession four years ago.

About the Report

This analysis is based upon both the 2000 Decennial Census and the 2005-2011 American Community Surveys, which are conducted annually. These datasets produce nationally representative estimates of the U.S. population.

The data were obtained from the Integrated Public Use Microdata database (IPUMS), provided by the University of Minnesota. Further information about the IPUMS is available at www.ipums.org.

Analyses focus on 1) minor grandchildren living in the same household as their grandparent who is the household head, the spouse of the head, the parent of the head, or the parent-in-law of the head and 2) any grandparent who is living with a grandchild under the age of 18

The report was written by senior researcher Gretchen Livingston. Paul Taylor, executive vice president of the Pew Research Center and director of the Social & Demographic Trends project, and Kim Parker, associate director of the Social & Demographic Trends project, provided editorial guidance. Anna Brown, research assistant, provided formatting and number-checking assistance. Marcia Kramer of Kramer Editing Services copy-edited the report.

Notes on Terminology

Grandparent co-resider: any adult who is living in the same household as at least one minor grandchild

Grandparent caregiver: a grandparent co-resider who reports being "currently responsible for most of the basic needs" of a minor co-resident grandchild

Grandchild living with a grandparent: a minor grandchild living in the same household as a grandparent co-resider, if that grandparent co-resider is a household head or spouse, or parent or parent-in-law of the head

Grandchild being cared for by a grandparent: a minor child whose co-resident grandparent reports being "currently responsible for most of the basic needs" of a co-resident grandchild

Race: All whites, blacks and Asians are non-Hispanic. Hispanics can be of any race

Children Living with or Being Cared for by a Grandparent

In 2011, 7.7 million children were living in the same household as at least one of their grandparents.⁴ This translates into 10% of all children under the age of 18 in the U.S. A sizable minority of these children are not only living with their grandparent, but are being cared for by their grandparent as well. All told, 4% of minors—more than 3 million children—fall into this category.

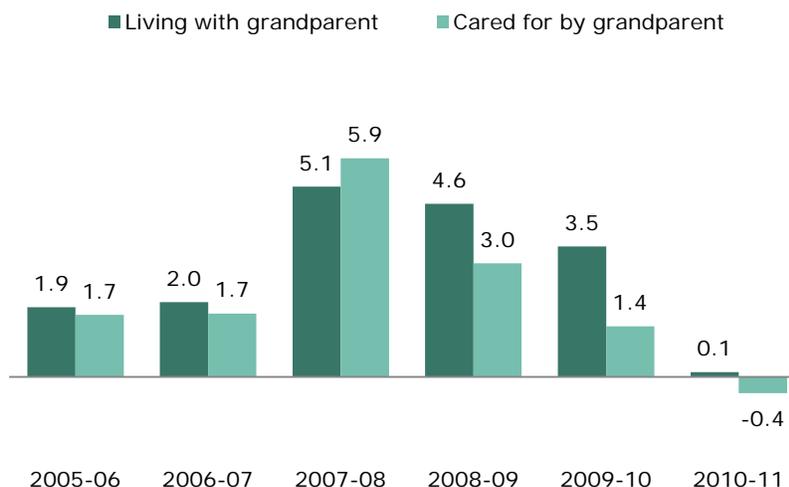
The number of children living with or being cared for primarily by grandparents rose gradually from 2000, when data were first collected, and then began a more precipitous rise after the onset of the recession in 2007. The number of children with co-resident grandparents rose by 5 percent from 2007 to 2008, and the number of children being cared for primarily by a grandparent rose by almost 6 percent during that same period.

The increases have been more modest since 2008,

however, and from 2010 to 2011 both the number of children living with a grandparent and the number being cared for by a grandparent remained virtually unchanged.⁵

Children Living with or Being Cared for Primarily by a Grandparent Rose During Recession, Stabilized Thereafter

Annual % change in number of children



Notes: Those "Cared for by Grandparent" include those whose co-resident grandparent reports being currently responsible for most of the basic needs of a co-resident grandchild.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of American Community Survey (IPUMS)

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⁴ Only grandchildren who have a co-resident grandparent who is the head of the household, the spouse of the head, or the parent or parent-in-law of the head of household can be easily linked to that grandparent. The small share of grandchildren who occupy other positions in the household are excluded from the analysis.

⁵ The *shares* of children living with or being raised by a grandparent also rose rapidly during the recession and have since stabilized.

The Likelihood of Living with or Being Cared for by a Grandparent

Children who are living apart from their parents are among the most likely to be living with a grandparent; fully 47% do. In contrast, children living with one or both parents are much less likely to be living with a grandparent. Some 16% of children living with one parent are also living with a grandparent, and 5% of children who live with both parents live with a grandparent.

Similarly, children who are living apart from their parents are also most likely to have a grandparent caregiver; more than one-third (37%) do. Among children living with one parent, 6% have a grandparent caregiver. Just 1% of children living with two parents have a grandparent caregiver.

Black and Asian children are more likely than Hispanic or white children to be living with a grandparent. Some 15% of both blacks and Asians are doing so. For Latinos, the share is 13%, and just 7% of white children are living with a grandparent.

The Likelihood of Living with or Being Cared for Primarily by a Grandparent, 2011

% of all children

	<u>Living with grandparent</u>	<u>Being cared for by grandparent</u>
All children	10	4
No parents in household	47	37
1 parent in household	16	6
2 parents in household	5	1
White	7	3
Black	15	8
Hispanic	13	4
Asian	15	2
Native born	11	4
Foreign born	8	2
Less than 6 years old	14	6
6-12 years	9	4
13-17 years	8	3
Male	10	4
Female	10	4
Below poverty level	10	5
1-3 times poverty level	13	5
3-5 times poverty level	10	3
5 times poverty level or more	6	2

Notes: Those "Being Cared for by Grandparent" include those whose co-resident grandparent reports being currently responsible for most of the basic needs of a co-resident grandchild. Whites, blacks and Asians are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of American Community Survey (IPUMS)

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Black children are at least twice as likely as children of other racial and ethnic groups to be under the care of a grandparent. Some 8% of black children fall into this category. Among Latino children, the share is 4%. Some 3% of white children are cared for primarily by a grandparent. While a relatively large share of Asian children live with their grandparents, only 2% are being cared for primarily by those grandparents.

Native-born children are more likely to be living with a grandparent than are foreign-born children, and are more likely to be cared for primarily by a grandparent, as well. Some 11% of native-born children, compared with 8% of those who are foreign-born, are living with a grandparent. And 4% of native-born children are cared for primarily by a grandparent, compared with 2% of foreign-born children.⁶

This may seem counterintuitive, given that immigrant families are more apt to live in [multigenerational households](#). However, it is likely that if a child was born outside of the U.S., the grandparent may still be residing outside of the U.S. and thus be unavailable for co-residence or caregiving.

Younger children are particularly likely to be living with a grandparent—fully 14% of those under the age of 6 are. In comparison, 9% of children ages 6 to 12 and 8% of those ages 13 to 17 live with a grandparent. A similar pattern emerges in terms of receiving care from a grandparent. A grandparent is the primary caregiver for 6% of those under age 6. In comparison, 4% of children ages 6 to 12 are cared for primarily by a grandparent, as are 3% of those ages 13 to 17.

Children living in or near poverty are more likely to be living with a grandparent, or cared for primarily by a grandparent, than are children who are more economically advantaged. Some 10% of children living below the poverty line are living with a grandparent, while just 6% of those in households with incomes at least five times above the poverty line are. And while 5% of those whose household incomes are three times the poverty level or less are being cared for by a grandparent, the number drops to 2% for those living in households with incomes at least five times above the poverty line.⁷

⁶ “Foreign born” refers to persons born outside of the United States to parents neither of whom was a U.S. citizen. Foreign born also refers to those born in Puerto Rico. All others are considered “native born”.

⁷ To put this in perspective, the [poverty threshold](#) for a family of two adults and two children in 2011 was \$22,811.

The Likelihood of Living with, or Being Cared for by, a Grandparent, by Race and Ethnicity

While the likelihood that a child will either live with a grandparent or be cared for primarily by a grandparent varies considerably by race and ethnicity, the demographic patterns relating to grandchild co-residence and care are fairly consistent across racial and ethnic groups. For instance, among blacks, whites, Hispanics and Asians, younger children are more likely than older children to be either living with, cared for primarily by, a grandparent. And for all groups, the native born are markedly more likely than the foreign born to live with a grandparent, or be cared for primarily by a grandparent.

The Likelihood of Living with or Being Cared for Primarily by a Grandparent, by Race and Ethnicity 2011

% of all children

	Living with grandparent				Being cared for by grandparent			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
All children	7	15	13	15	3	8	4	2
No parents in household	49	54	39	24	41	42	28	13
1 parent in household	15	15	17	22	6	6	6	6
2 parents in household	3	4	7	14	*	1	1	1
Native born	7	15	13	17	3	8	5	3
Foreign born	5	9	8	9	1	4	2	2
Less than 6 years old	10	20	18	19	4	10	6	4
6-12 years	7	14	11	15	3	7	4	2
13-17 years	6	12	8	11	2	6	2	1
Male	7	15	13	16	3	8	4	2
Female	8	15	13	15	3	8	4	2
Below poverty level	8	13	10	11	4	7	4	3
1-3 times poverty level	10	18	15	20	4	9	5	4
3-5 times poverty level	7	17	15	16	2	7	4	2
5 times poverty level or more	4	11	10	11	1	4	3	1

Notes: Percentages greater than zero but less than 0.5% are replaced with an asterisk (*). Those "Being Cared for by Grandparent" include those whose co-resident grandparent reports being currently responsible for most of the basic needs of a co-resident grandchild. Whites, blacks and Asians are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of American Community Survey (IPUMS)

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The one characteristic where notable racial and ethnic differences emerge is household structure. White and black children look fairly similar—about half of those who have no parent in the household are living with a grandparent, as are roughly 15% of those who also have one parent in the household and 3% of those with two parents present. Among Hispanic children living apart from their parents, only 39% are living with a grandparent. Some 17% of those living with one parent live with a grandparent, and 7% of those who have two parents in the household also live with a grandparent.

While in most cases the likelihood of living with a grandparent declines precipitously with the presence of one or two parents in the household, among Asian children this pattern is less salient. Just 24% of Asian children who live apart from their parents are living with a grandparent. However, compared with the other groups, a larger share—22%—of Asian children who live with one parent are also living with a grandparent, and fully 14% of those living with two parents are living with a grandparent.

For children in all four racial and ethnic groups, the likelihood of being cared for primarily by a grandparent is similar for those living with either one parent or two parents. About 6% of those with one parent are being cared for primarily by a grandparent, as are 1% of those living with two parents. Differences persist, though, among those children living apart from their parents. While just over 40% of white children and black children in this category are being cared for primarily by their grandparents, this share drops to 28% for Hispanic children and to only 13% for Asian children.

Profiles of Children who Are Living with or Being Cared for Primarily by Grandparents

Another way to look at children living with or being cared for primarily by grandparents is to consider the makeup of those who are in these situations. The profile, or composition, of these children is a function of the general makeup of all children in the U.S. and the fact that different subgroups are more or less likely to be living with or cared for by a grandparent. For instance, white children are less likely than other groups to be living with a grandparent. As a result, the total composition of white children living with a grandparent is 38%—far lower than their share in the overall population of children (53%).

In 80% of cases where a child is living with a grandparent, there is also at least one parent living in the household as well. For half (51%) of these children, there is one parent in the household, and for 29%, there are two parents in the household, in addition to a grandparent. One-fifth of children living with a grandparent are living apart from their parents.

Among those children being cared for primarily by a grandparent, 52% are living with one parent, and 8% are living with both parents. The remaining 40% of children being cared for by a grandparent are living apart from their parents. In comparison, among all children in the U.S., 62% are living with two parents, 34% are living with one parent, and 4% are living apart from both parents.

Fully 38% of children living with a grandparent are white, and 29% are Hispanic. One-fifth (20%) are black, and 6% are Asian. The pattern is similar among the subset of children who are also being cared for primarily by a grandparent—39% are white, 26% are black, 25% are Hispanic and 3% are Asian. In contrast, among all children in the U.S., just over half (53%) are white, 24% are Hispanic, 14% are black and 4% are Asian.

Profiles of Children Living with or Being Cared for Primarily by a Grandparent, 2011

% (unless otherwise noted)

	Living with grandparent	Being cared for by grandparent
No parents in household	20	40
1 parent in household	51	52
2 parents in household	29	8
White	38	39
Black	20	26
Hispanic	29	25
Asian	6	3
Native born	97	98
Foreign born	3	2
Less than 6 years old	44	45
6-12 years	35	35
13-17 years	21	20
Male	51	51
Female	49	49
Below poverty level	22	28
1-3 times poverty level	49	49
3-5 times poverty level	19	16
5 times poverty level or more	10	7
Median adjusted annual household income	\$43,300	\$36,000

Notes: Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding. Those "Being Cared for by Grandparent" include those whose co-resident grandparent reports being currently responsible for most of the basic needs of a co-resident grandchild. Whites, blacks and Asians are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. "Other" race not shown. Income adjusted to account for economies of scale, and standardized to three-person household.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of American Community Survey (IPUMS)

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A plurality of children living with grandparents—44%—are under the age of 6. However, notable shares are ages 6 to 12 (35%) and 13 to 17 (21%). Among those children being cared for primarily by grandparents, 45% are under the age of 6. An additional 35% are between the ages of 6 and 12 years, and 20% are ages 13 to 17. The share of young children is lower in the full

population of U.S. minors—one-third (33%) are less than age 6, while 39% are 6 to 12 years old, and 28% are 13 to 17.

Just over one-fifth (22%) of children who are living with a grandparent are living below the poverty line. About half (49%) are living at or just above poverty, and 29% are in households that have incomes at least three times the poverty level. Some 28% of children being cared for primarily by a grandparent are living below the poverty line, and about half (49%) are living at or somewhat above the poverty line. The remaining 23% have household incomes that place them more than three times above poverty levels. Among all U.S. children, 22% are living below the poverty line.

The annual adjusted median income in households where grandchildren are living with their grandparents is about \$43,000, but it drops to just \$36,000 in that subset of households where the grandparent is also the primary caregiver. In comparison, children who don't live with a grandparent are in households where the annual adjusted median income is about \$48,000.⁸

Profiles of Children who Are Living with or Being Cared for Primarily by Grandparents, by Race and Ethnicity

The household structure among children living with or being cared for primarily by a grandparent differs markedly by race and ethnicity. A higher share (32%) of black children who live with a grandparent is living apart from their parents. For Asian children, this share is very low—only 5%. And while only 22% of Asian children living with a grandparent are living with one parent, for the other groups, this share is 50% or more. Conversely, about three-fourths (74%) of Asian children who live with a grandparent are also living with two parents. This share is 31% for whites and Latinos, and only 9% for black children living with a grandparent.

Among that subset of children who are not only living with their grandparents but are being cared for primarily by them as well, almost half (49%) of blacks are living apart from their parents, as are 39% of whites, 34% of Hispanics and 16% of Asians. Roughly half of whites, blacks and Hispanics who are being cared for primarily by a grandparent also are living with one parent, but this is the case for only 35% of Asians. And relatively small shares of whites

⁸ Median household income is adjusted using an equivalence scale that corrects for economies of scale and is then standardized to represent a three-person household. For more details, see Pew Research Center, "[The Rising Age Gap in Economic Well-Being](#)," Social & Demographic Trends project, November 2011.

Profiles of Children Living with or Being Cared for Primarily by a Grandparent, by Race and Ethnicity 2011

%

	Living with grandparent				Being cared for by grandparent			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
No parents in household	19	32	16	5	39	49	34	16
1 parent in household	50	59	53	22	53	48	56	35
2 parents in household	31	9	31	74	8	2	11	49
Native born	99	99	95	88	100	99	95	86
Foreign born	1	1	5	12	*	1	5	14
Less than 6 years old	41	42	49	40	42	42	52	50
6-12 years	36	35	34	39	36	34	33	36
13-17 years	23	23	17	20	22	24	15	13
Male	51	51	51	52	50	51	51	52
Female	49	49	49	48	50	49	49	48
Below poverty level	14	32	26	9	19	38	33	16
1-3 times poverty level	47	48	54	45	50	48	51	50
3-5 times poverty level	25	15	14	24	21	11	12	21
5 times poverty level or more	14	5	5	22	11	4	4	14

Notes: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Percentages greater than zero but less than 0.5% are replaced with an asterisk (*). Those "Being Cared for by Grandparent" include those whose co-resident grandparent reports being currently responsible for most of the basic needs of a co-resident grandchild. Whites, blacks and Asians are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of American Community Survey (IPUMS)

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(8%), blacks (2%) and Hispanics (11%) who are being cared for primarily by grandparents have two parents in the household, a share that rises to 49% for Asian children.

Nativity differences among children living with or being cared for primarily by a grandparent reflect the fact that a much larger share of Hispanic and Asian children in general are foreign born. Almost all black and white children either living with or being cared for primarily by a grandparent are native born; for Hispanic children, the share drops slightly to 95%. And some 88% of Asian children living with a grandparent are native born, as are 86% of Asian children being cared for primarily by a grandparent.

Among children living with their grandparents, Hispanics tend to be a bit younger than others—fully 49% are less than 6 years of age. Conversely, 17% are ages 13 to 17, compared with 23% of white and black children and 20% of Asian children. Among children being cared for primarily by grandparents, both Hispanics and Asians are relatively young—about half are less than 6, compared with 42% of both whites and blacks.

There are notable racial and ethnic differences in the prevalence of poverty among these children. And again, this is largely reflective of overall racial and ethnic differences in poverty. While 14% of white and 9% of Asian children who live with their grandparent are living below the poverty line, this number rises to 26% among Hispanic children and 32% among black children living with a grandparent. At the other end of the spectrum, just 5% of black and Hispanic children who live with a grandparent have household incomes at least five times the poverty level. This share rises to 14% for whites, and 22% for Asians.

The poverty profiles are similar among those children who are also being cared for primarily by a grandparent. While 38% of blacks and 33% of Hispanics are in households with annual incomes below the poverty line, these shares are 19% among whites and 16% among Asians. And while just 4% of black and Hispanic children who are being cared for primarily by grandparents have household incomes that are at least five times the poverty level, the shares rise to 11% for white children, and 14% for Asian children.

Parents who Live with their Children While Children Are Being Cared for Primarily by Grandparents

Among children being cared for by a grandparent and also living with at least one parent, two-thirds (66%) have only a mother in the household, 21% have only a father in the household, and 14% are living with both parents. Among children who are being cared for primarily by a grandparent but living with just one parent, in most cases (76%) that parent is their mother. In comparison, minor children who live with a parent but no grandparent caregiver, some 27% have a mother only in the household, 7% have a father only, and two-thirds (66%) have both a mother and father in the household.

On most measures, parents who are living with their minor children while their children are being cared for primarily by a grandparent are disadvantaged, compared with parents who are living with their minor children and no grandparent caregiver. For instance, in households where the grandparent is the primary caregiver for the child, 44% of the parents gave birth as a

teen, and 31% of the parents are under the age of 25.⁹ In households with no grandparent caregiver, just 18% have a parent who was a teen parent, and 5% include a parent under the age of 25.

And while 77% of parents in households with grandparent caregivers are unmarried, this number is just 31% among parents in other households.

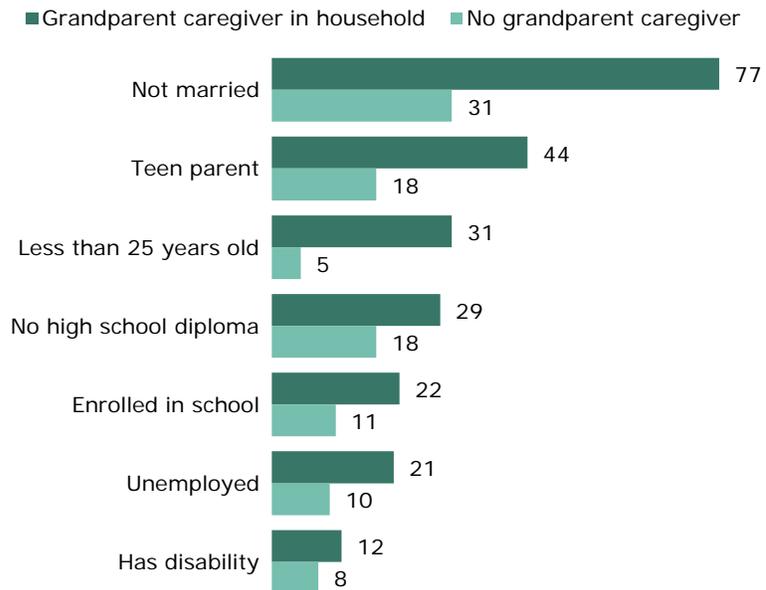
Fully 29% of parents living in a household with a grandparent caregiver lack a high school diploma, compared with 18% of parents in other households. And while 22% of parents in households with grandparent caregivers are enrolled in school, the share is just half that (11%) for parents in other households.

Parents in households that include a grandparent caregiver are twice as likely to be unemployed as parents of minors in other types of households. While one-fifth (21%) of parents living with a grandparent caregiver are unemployed, the share is 10% among parents in other households.

Finally, while some 12% of parents in households that include a grandparent caregiver report that they have a serious disability, this share is 8% among parents in households with minor children and no grandparent caregiver.

Parents of Children with Grandparent Caregiver Face Many Obstacles

Profile of parents who are living with their minor child, 2011



Notes: "Children with Grandparent Caregiver" are those whose co-resident grandparent reports being currently responsible for most of the basic needs of a co-resident grandchild.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of American Community Survey (IPUMS)

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⁹ The estimates of parents who gave birth as teens, and parents who are under the age of 25 are calculated based upon the children with whom the parent is currently living. As such, they are likely underestimates of the total shares of parents with these characteristics.

Grandparents Living with or Serving as Primary Caregivers for their Grandchildren

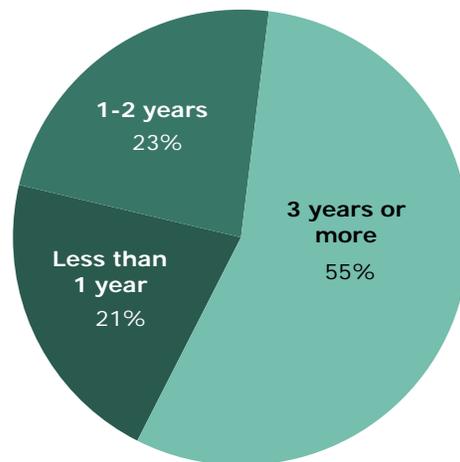
In 2011, fully 7 million grandparents were living in the same household as their grandchildren. This marks a 22% increase from 2000, when 5.8 million grandparents lived with their grandchildren, and a 13% increase from 2007. As is the case with co-resident grandchildren, the number of grandparents rose notably during the recession and is beginning to level off.

All told, more than 2.7 million grandparents not only live with a grandchild, but also serve as the primary caregiver to that child. This marks a 12% increase from 2000, and most of that increase occurred since the onset of the recession in 2007. From 2007 to 2008, the number of grandparent caregivers grew by 5%; from 2008 to 2009, the number grew 3%. Since that time, the number of caregiving grandparents has declined slightly.

Most of these grandparents are spending an extended period of time as primary caregivers to their grandchildren. Some 55% have been doing so for three years or more (38% for five years or more), and almost one-fourth (23%) have been responsible for their grandchild for one to two years. One-fifth (21%) have been caring for a grandchild for less than a year.

In it for the Long Haul

Years spent by grandparents as primary caregivers for their grandchildren, 2011



Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Primary caregiving grandparents include those who report that they are currently responsible for most of the basic needs of a co-resident grandchild.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of American Community Survey (IPUMS)

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Profiles of Grandparents who Are Living with or Serving as Primary Caregivers for their Grandchildren

A plurality (47%) of co-residing grandparents are white, and fully one-fourth (25%) are Latino. Some 17% are black, and 8% are Asian. Fully half of grandparent caregivers (51%) are white, while 22% are black, 20% are Latino and 3% are Asian. In the full population of people ages 50 and older, whites comprise a larger share—76%. Ten percent of this group is black, 9% is Hispanic and 4% is Asian.

While the majority—68%—of grandparent co-residers are native born, a disproportionate share—32%—were born in Puerto Rico or another country. And among grandparent caregivers, 80% are native born and the remaining 20% are foreign born. Among all people ages 50 and older, fully 86% are native born.

Grandparent co-residers and caregivers tend to be relatively young. The majority (54%) of co-residers are under the age of 60, and 9% are less than 45 years old. At the other end of the spectrum, 17% are in their 70s, or older. Among grandparent caregivers, 12% are less than 45 years old, and more than half (54%) are ages 45 to 59. One-fourth (25%) are ages 60 to 69 and just 9% are 70 years or older.

Almost two-thirds (64%) of grandparents who are living with their grandchildren are women, and 36% are men. As with co-residers, the majority (63%) of grandparent caregivers are grandmothers, as opposed to grandfathers. In contrast, 46% of the population ages 50 and older is male, and just 54% is female.

Profiles of Grandparents Living with or Serving as the Primary Caregiver for a Grandchild, 2011

%	Living with grandchild	Caring for grandchild
White	47	51
Black	17	22
Hispanic	25	20
Asian	8	3
Native born	68	80
Ages 30-44	9	12
Ages 45-59	46	54
Ages 60-69	28	25
70 or older	17	9
Male	36	37
Female	64	63
Married	59	66
No high school diploma	30	26
High school graduate	33	34
Some college or more	36	40
Below poverty level	17	22
1-3 times poverty level	48	49
3-5 times poverty level	23	19
5 times poverty level or more	12	10
Disabled	26	24

Notes: Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding. Those "Caring for Grandchild" include those who report that they are currently responsible for most of the basic needs of a co-resident grandchild. Whites, blacks and Asians are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. "Other" race not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of American Community Survey (IPUMS)

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About six-in-ten (59%) grandparent co-residers are married, as are two-thirds (66%) of grandparent caregivers. In the general population, six-in-ten people ages 50 and older are married.

Grandparent co-residers and caregivers have relatively low levels of education. Some 30% of grandparent co-residers lack a high school diploma, 33% have a high school diploma, and 36% report that they have attended college. A quarter (26%) of grandparent caregivers lack a high school diploma, 34% have a high school diploma, and four-in-ten (40%) have at least some college experience. In comparison, just 16% of people ages 50 and older lack a high school diploma, and more than half (53%) have attended college.

Among co-residing grandparents, 17% are living below the poverty line, and 48% are living between the poverty level and three times the poverty level. Among caregiving grandparents, one-fifth (22%) are living below the poverty line. About half (49%) are living at or a bit above the poverty line. The remaining 29% are living at least three times above the poverty line. Among the broader population of people ages 50 and older, just 10% have incomes below the poverty line.

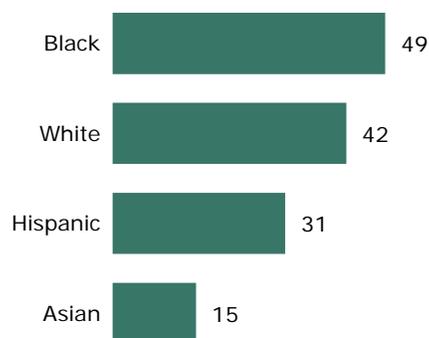
About one-fourth of both grandparent co-residers (26%) and grandparent caregivers (24%) report that they are dealing with a significant disability of some kind. These rates are very similar to the rate among the general population ages 50 and older (26%).

Profiles of Grandparents who Are Living with or Primary Caregivers for their Grandchildren, by Race and Ethnicity

The likelihood that a co-resident grandparent will also be the primary caregiver of a grandchild varies notably by race and ethnicity. About half (49%) of black co-resident grandparents are the primary caregiver for a grandchild. The share is also quite high—42%—among white grandparents. Among Latino co-resident grandparents, the

Grandparent Co-Residers Serving as the Primary Caregiver for a Grandchild, by Race and Ethnicity 2011

% among co-resident grandparents



Notes: Grandparents who are the primary caregivers for their grandchildren include those who report that they are currently responsible for most of the basic needs of a co-resident grandchild. Whites, blacks and Asians are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of American Community Survey (IPUMS)

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share drops to 31%, and just 15% of Asian co-resident grandparents are the primary caregiver for their grandchild.

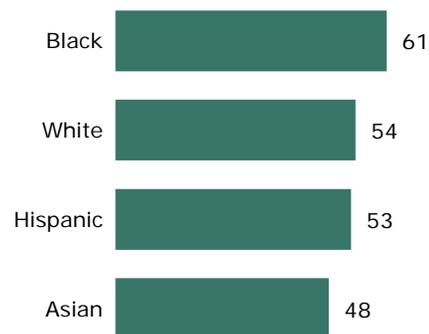
The amount of time that caregiving grandparents have spent as a primary caregiver to a grandchild is high across all racial and ethnic groups, but again there is also notable variation. Fully six-in-ten (61%) black caregiving grandparents report that they have spent three or more years as the primary caregiver of a grandchild. This share drops to 54% for white grandparent caregivers and 53% for those who are Latino. Just less than half (48%) of Asian grandparent caregivers report spending so many years caring for a grandchild.

The vast majority of white grandparents who are living with or caring for a grandchild are native born (94% and 97%, respectively). The same is true for African American grandparents (87% of co-residers are native born, as are 92% of caregivers). Among Latinos and Asians, though, only a minority of grandparent co-residers and caregivers were born in the U.S. Among Latinos, 26% of co-residers were born in the U.S., as were 35% of caregivers. And among Asian grandparents who are living with a grandchild, only 6% were born in the U.S. Some 9% of Asian grandparents who are caring for a grandchild are native born.

The share of young grandparent co-residers is higher among blacks and Hispanics than among other groups, likely reflecting the fact that these groups are more likely to have children at younger ages. While 11% of blacks and 12% of Hispanics who are grandparent co-residers are less than 45 years old, this share is 7% among whites and 2% among Asian grandparent co-residers. Among grandparent caregivers, it is also the case that a disproportionate share of Hispanics (18%) and blacks (14%) are younger than 45 years of age, compared with 9% of whites and 6% of Asians.

Long-Term Grandparent Caregivers, by Race and Ethnicity 2011

% of grandparent caregivers primarily responsible for a grandchild for 3 years or more



Notes: Grandparent caregivers are those who report that they are currently responsible for most of the basic needs of a co-resident grandchild. Whites, blacks and Asians are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of American Community Survey (IPUMS)

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The share of women who are co-residers or caregivers is markedly higher for blacks than for the other groups. Fully 73% of black co-residing grandparents are female, while the share among the other racial and ethnic groups ranges from 61% to 63%. And the composition of grandparent caregivers is almost exactly the same—72% of black caregivers are women, while the share that is female is 59% to 62% among the other racial and ethnic groups.

African American co-residers and caregivers are also much less likely to be married than other racial and ethnic groups—this is reflective of the low marriage rates in the African American community in general. Some 43% of black grandparent co-residers are married, compared with 61% of whites, 62% of Hispanics and 68% of Asians. The results are more dramatic among caregivers. While less than half (48%) of blacks are married, 70% of Hispanics are, as are 73% of whites and 74% of Asians.

Latino grandparents who are co-residers or caregivers are significantly more likely than others to lack a high school diploma. At the other end of the educational spectrum, 19% of Hispanic co-residers and 22% of Hispanic caregivers report any college experience. In comparison, across all other groups, the shares of co-residers and caregivers with college experience hover around 40%.

As is the case in the larger population, it is among black and Latino grandparent co-residers and caregivers that poverty is most prevalent. Fully 26% of black co-residers and 22% of Latino co-residers have household incomes below the poverty line, compared with 12% of white grandparent co-residers and 8% of Asian grandparent co-residers. Among caregiving grandparents, 31% of blacks are living below the poverty line, as are 28% of Hispanics. The shares living below the poverty line drop to 15% for whites and 14% for Asians.

White grandparent co-residers are the most likely to report a disability of some kind—28% do—while Hispanic co-residers are the least likely to report as much, with 21% reporting a disability. The racial and ethnic gap is a bit wider among grandparent caregivers. While 27% of blacks report a disability, only 15% of Asian caregivers report as much.

Profiles of Grandparents Living with or Serving as the Primary Caregiver for a Grandchild, by Race and Ethnicity 2011

%

	Living with grandchild				Caring for grandchild			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Native born	94	87	26	6	97	92	35	9
Ages 30-44	7	11	12	2	9	14	18	6
Ages 45-59	46	47	50	24	55	52	57	41
Ages 60-69	30	27	24	38	27	25	19	36
70 or older	17	14	14	36	9	9	6	16
Male	38	27	37	39	41	28	39	38
Female	62	73	63	61	59	72	61	62
Married	61	43	62	68	73	48	70	74
No high school diploma	17	24	58	39	17	22	52	38
High school graduate	40	35	23	22	38	35	26	22
Some college or more	43	41	19	39	45	43	22	41
Below poverty level	12	26	22	8	15	31	28	14
1-3 times poverty level	44	48	56	43	48	49	54	47
3-5 times poverty level	27	18	16	26	24	15	13	23
5 times poverty level or more	16	8	6	23	13	6	5	17
Disabled	28	27	21	24	25	27	18	15

Notes: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Those "Caring for Grandchild" include those who report that they are currently responsible for most of the basic needs of a co-resident grandchild. Whites, blacks and Asians are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

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