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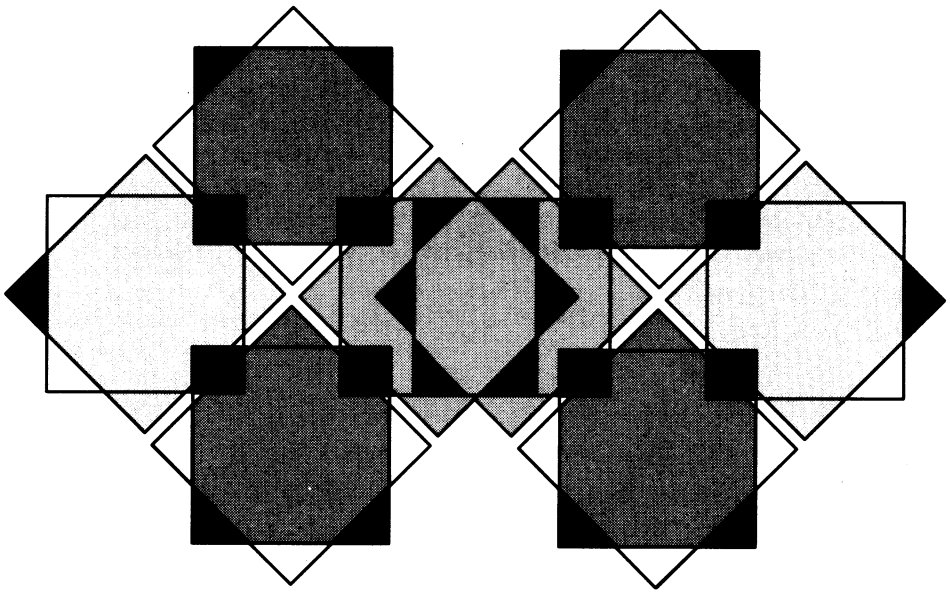
The Diverse Living Arrangements of Children: Summer 1991



SIPP
Survey of Income and Program Participation

by Stacy Furukawa

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

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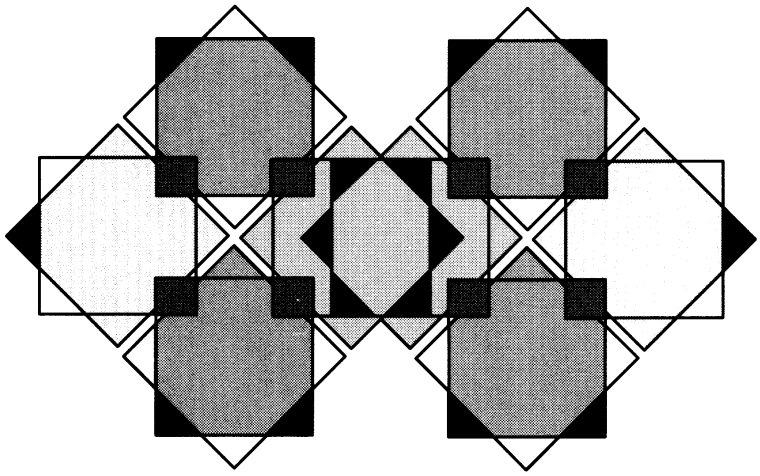

by Stacy Furukawa

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The Diverse Living Arrangements of Children: Summer 1991

INTRODUCTION AND HIGHLIGHTS

This report is the first to present findings on the diverse living arrangements of children from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). Although many surveys collect information on the relationship of children to the householder, the SIPP is unique in that it records how each person is related to everyone else in the household. Beyond the nuclear family, we can determine, for example, whether a child lives with a grandparent, aunt, uncle, or cousin. Detailed information on parent-child relationships is also provided, allowing us to identify biological, step, foster, and adoptive ties. Similar data are collected for siblings. With this additional information, we now are able to examine family structure in more detail than was possible in previous Bureau of the Census reports. Topics discussed in this report include nuclear families, extended families (including multi-generational families), stepfamilies, and adoption.

The statistics presented in this report are based on national-level estimates of children under 18 and their living situations, for the period June through September, 1991.[1] The findings in this report pertain to all children, regardless of the child's marital or parental status. Since this report is based on a sample survey, its results are subject to sampling variability. In particular, estimates for subgroups under 200,000 and small differences between groups should be interpreted with caution.

The major findings of this report include the following:

- In 1991, 47.8 (±0.4) million children under age 18 lived with two parents (73±0.8 percent); 15.7 (± 0.5) million lived with one parent (24±0.7 percent); and an additional 1.8 (±0.2) million lived with neither parent (3±0.3 percent).[2] Although the majority of children living with a single parent were White (63± 1.7 percent), Black children were 2.5 times more likely to live in a one-parent family than were White children (Blacks, 49±2.2 percent; Whites, 19±0.8 percent).
- One out of two children lived in a nuclear family composed solely of both biological parents and full brothers and sisters (51±0.9 percent). The remaining children lived in a home that included, for example, a single parent, stepparent, grandparent, or another relative or non-relative.
- Fifteen (±0.6) percent of all children (9.8±0.4 million) lived in blended families (i.e., homes in which children lived with at least one stepparent, stepsibling, or half-sibling). More children lived with at least one half-brother or half-sister (7±0.4 million) than with a stepparent (4.6±0.3 million) or with at least one stepsibling (980,000±140,000).
- Living in a blended family was equally likely for children in one-parent families (15.5±1.3 percent) and children in two-parent families (15.2±0.7 percent).
- Approximately 1.1 (±0.1) million children lived with at least one adoptive parent.
- Of children living with at least one parent, 8.0 (±0.4) million (12.5±0.6 percent) lived in an extended household. Approximately 5.7 million (±0.3) children lived in households extended by relatives only, compared with 1.9 million (±0.2) in homes extended by nonrelatives only, and 313,000 (±80,00) in those extended by both relatives and nonrelatives.
- Children in one-parent families were four times more likely to live in an extended family (29.9±1.6 percent) than were children living with two parents (6.8±0.5 percent).
- Among children in single-mother families, 20 (±1.5) percent also lived with an adult male (related or

[1]The estimates for 1991 in this report are inflated to national population controls by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. The population controls are based on results of the 1980 census carried forward to 1991. The estimates in this report, therefore, may differ from estimates that would have been obtained using the 1990 census results brought forward to the survey date. Population controls incorporating 1990 results will be used for survey estimation beginning in 1993.

All demographic surveys, including the Current Population Survey (CPS) and the SIPP, suffer from undercoverage of the population. This undercoverage results from missed housing units and missed persons within sample households. Compared with the level of the 1980 Decennial Census, overall CPS and SIPP undercoverage is about 7 percent. Undercoverage varies with age, sex, and race. For some groups such as 20-to-24-year-old Black males, the undercoverage is as high as about 35 percent. The weighting procedures used by the Census Bureau partially correct for the bias resulting from undercoverage. However, its final impact on estimates is unknown. For details, see appendix C, Source and Accuracy of Estimates.

[2]The values shown in parentheses represent the 90-percent confidence interval, which is the standard used by the Census Bureau for the comparison of statistics based on sample surveys. All of the statements in this report meet this requirement. See appendix C for a more detailed discussion of sampling error and how it may affect the data.

unrelated) present in the household; 37 (±5.1) percent of children living with a single father also lived with an adult female (related or unrelated).

- Seven (±0.5) percent of all children (4.7±0.3 million) lived with at least one grandparent. Of children living with a single parent and a grandparent, most lived in the grandparent's home (81±3.8 percent); but among children in two-parent families with a grandparent in the home, most lived in the parents' home (62±5.7 percent).

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILDREN

The living patterns of children have changed dramatically over the past three decades. With a growing proportion of women bearing children out of wedlock, along with high divorce rates, more children than ever are spending at least part of their childhood in single-parent families.

In 1991, 73 percent of the 65.7 million children under 18 lived with two parents[3], 21 percent lived with their mother only, 3 percent lived with their father only, and 3 percent lived with neither parent.[4] (See figure 1 and table 1.) Throughout this report, unless a specific type is designated, "parent" refers to a biological, step, adoptive, or foster parent. Although most children lived with two parents, this varied sharply by race and ethnicity: 79 percent of all White children lived with two parents, compared with 42 percent of Black and 64 percent of Hispanic[5] children.

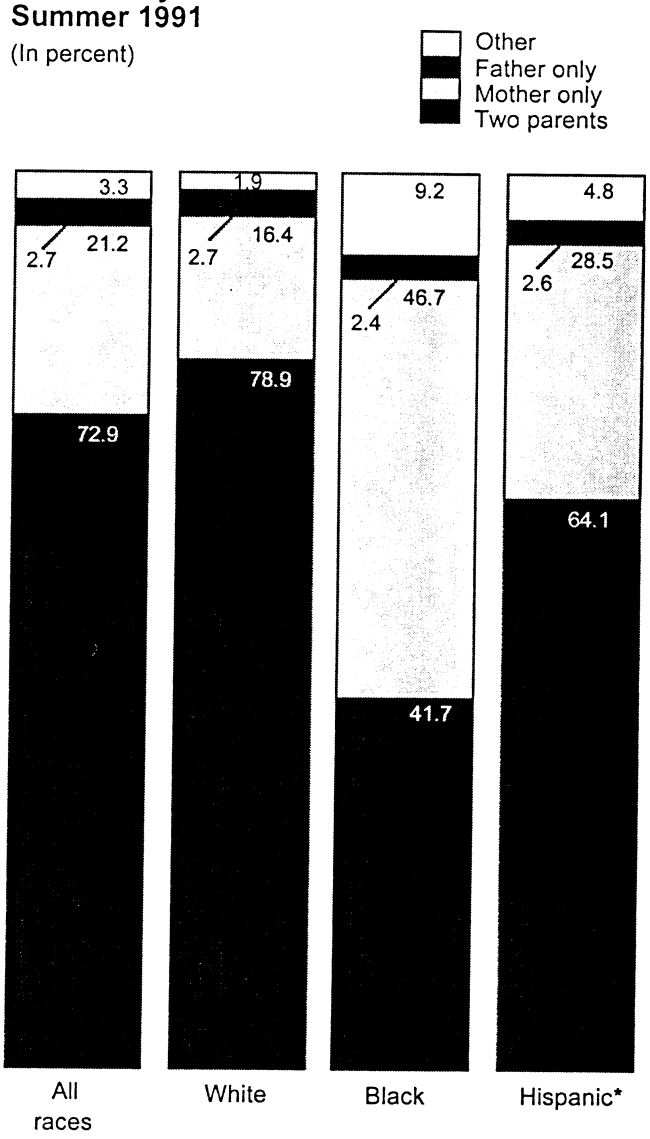
Approximately 15.7 million children lived with one parent. Although the majority of children living with a single parent were White (63 percent), Black children were 2.5 times more likely to live in a one-parent family than were White children. One-half of all Black children lived with one parent (49 percent), whereas nearly one-fifth of White children (19 percent) and one-third of Hispanic children (31 percent) lived in single-parent families. A disproportionate share of Black children lived with a lone parent: 16 percent of all children were Black, yet Blacks constituted one-third of all children living in one-parent families.

About 1.8 million children lived with neither parent. The majority of these children lived with one or both grandparents (61 percent); the others lived with other relatives and/or nonrelatives. Black children comprised one-half of all children living with a grandparent, but without a parent in the home.

Figure 1.

Children by Presence of Parents: Summer 1991

(In percent)



*Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race

Source: Table 1.

[3]This group includes 688,000 children who lived with two unmarried parents.

[4]The data presented in table 1 are roughly comparable with estimates yielded by the March 1991 Current Population Survey (CPS). However, in contrast to the CPS, the SIPP estimated more Black children living in two-parent families, and fewer Black children living in single-mother families (see below). It should be noted that the SIPP and the CPS estimates are not based on the same universe of children: the CPS figures exclude children who maintained their own household or family group. Their inclusion in the SIPP estimates only accounts for a minor portion of the difference. It may be that asking for detailed information on a parent-child relationship (i.e., biological, step, foster, and adoptive) encourages the reporting of parental presence, but this is speculative.

Characteristic	SIPP		CPS	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All Black children	10,571	100.0	10,209	100.0
Living with two parents	4,404	41.7	3,669	35.9
Living with mother only	4,938	46.7	5,516	54.0
Living with father only	258	2.4	358	3.5

Source of 1991 CPS data: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 461, *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1991*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1992.

[5]Children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Table 1. Living Arrangements of Children Under 18 Years, by Race and Hispanic Origin: Summer 1991

[Numbers in thousands]

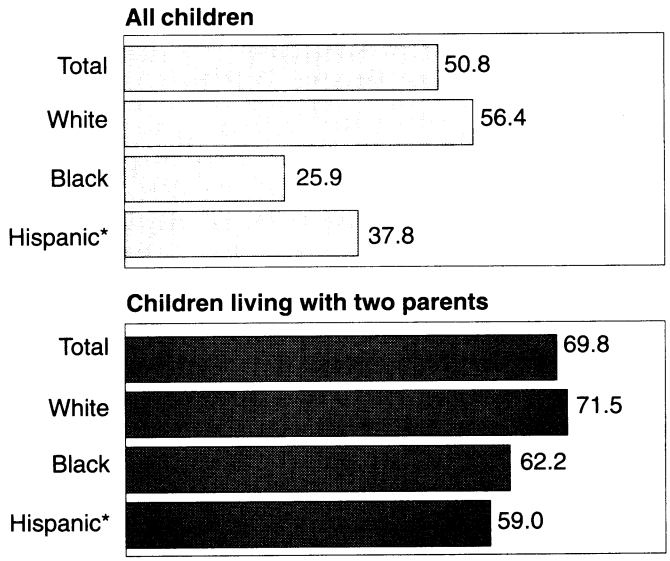
Living arrangements	All races	White	Black	Hispanic origin[1]
Children under 18 years	65,727	51,944	10,571	7,525
Living with—				
Two parents	47,826	40,995	4,404	4,826
In a traditional nuclear family[2]	33,403	29,292	2,741	2,846
One parent	15,748	9,919	5,196	2,337
Mother only	13,955	8,503	4,938	2,141
Father only	1,793	1,416	258	196
Grandparents only	1,099	469	570	100
Other	689	385	262	110
Unknown[3]	365	175	138	152
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Living with—				
Two parents	72.8	78.9	41.7	64.1
In a traditional nuclear family[2]	50.8	56.4	25.9	37.8
One parent	24.0	19.1	49.2	31.1
Mother only	21.2	16.4	46.7	28.5
Father only	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.6
Grandparents only	1.7	0.9	5.4	1.3
Other	1.0	0.7	2.5	1.5
Unknown[3]	0.6	0.3	1.3	2.0

[1]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
[2]Children in a traditional nuclear family live with both biological parents and, if siblings are present, with full brothers and sisters. No other household members are present.
[3]Data on living arrangements are missing for these children.

Figure 2.

Children Living in Traditional Nuclear Families: Summer 1991

(In percent)



*Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
Source: Table 1.

THE TRADITIONAL NUCLEAR FAMILY

The "decline" of the American family continues to be a controversial topic, both in the academic literature and in the popular press. Although we will not explore the debate in this report[6], we present estimates of what many consider to be the "traditional" family. By this, we refer to nuclear families in which children live with both biological parents and, if siblings are present, with only full siblings (i.e., brothers and sisters who share the same biological parents). No other persons are present in the household. Both parents are currently married, though not necessarily to their first spouse, and both may be employed.[7]

One-half of all children lived in nuclear families composed of only two parents and their biological children (table 1). White children were much more likely than were Black and Hispanic children to live in this type of family (56 percent for Whites, 26 percent for Blacks, and 38 percent for Hispanics). These differences, however, reflect variations in the propensity to live with two parents as well as the composition of two-parent families. Since White children were far more likely than were Black children to live with two parents, it is not surprising to find large differences by race in the proportion of children living in a traditional nuclear family. Simply put, a child cannot live in a traditional nuclear family if one or both parents are absent. Also, some of the variation is because of the composition of two-parent families. Following our definition, children who, for example, lived with two parents in a nuclear step-family or in an extended family were identified as members of a "non-traditional" household. If we focus only on children in two-parent families, do we continue to find such large differences in family composition?

In general, the likelihood of living in a traditional nuclear family is much greater for children in two-parent homes (70 percent) than for children as a whole (51 percent). When we examine only those children who lived in two-parent families, race and ethnic differences are smaller: 72 percent of White children lived in traditional nuclear families, compared with 62 percent of Blacks, and 59 percent of Hispanics. As shown in figure 2, this measure varies widely depending on the universe of children in question. Black and Hispanic children living in two-parent families vary significantly from their

[6]See David Popenoe, "American Family Decline, 1960-1990: A Review and Appraisal," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 55 (August 1993), pp. 14-22. Also see responses by Norvall D. Glenn, Judith Stacey, and Philip A. Cowan that follow the article.

[7]Please refer to Donald J. Hernandez, *America's Children: Resources from Family, Government, and the Economy* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1993), for a discussion of traditional breadwinner-homemaker families, popularly known as "Ozzie and Harriet" families (two-parent families with all children born after the parents' only marriage, the father works full-time year-round, and the mother is not in the labor force).

White counterparts, though not to the degree that is suggested by the first panel, which is based on **all** children.

NONTRADITIONAL FAMILIES

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

Although in 1991 most children lived in two-parent families, a substantial portion did not live with both biological parents. Here we examine the extent to which children lived with biological, step, adoptive, and foster[8] parents.[9]

Approximately 85 percent of children in two-parent families lived with both biological parents (table 2). An additional 10 percent lived with a biological parent and a stepparent, most frequently with a biological mother and stepfather. Children who lived with a biological parent and an adoptive parent (i.e., related adoptions), were placed in a biological parent/stepparent category in order to be consistent with survey instructions.[10] Less than 2 percent of children lived with foster or adoptive parents: one-half million children lived with two adoptive parents, and 195,000 lived with two foster parents.[11] Similar patterns were found when examining White, Black, and Hispanic children separately.[12]

Table 2. Children Living with Two Parents by their Biological, Step, Adoptive, and Foster Status, by Race and Hispanic Origin: Summer 1991

[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristics of parents	All races	White	Black	Hispanic origin[1]
Children living with two parents	47,826	40,995	4,404	4,826
Biological mother and father	40,553	35,002	3,576	4,129
Biological mother and stepfather	3,672	3,195	351	367
Biological father and stepmother	830	740	40	43
Adoptive mother and father[2]	582	387	103	42
Foster mother and father[3]	195	147	48	-
Other	1,994	1,524	286	245
Percent distribution	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Biological mother and father	84.8	85.4	81.2	85.6
Biological mother and stepfather	7.7	7.8	8.0	7.6
Biological father and stepmother	1.7	1.8	0.9	0.9
Adoptive mother and father[2]	1.2	0.9	2.3	0.9
Foster mother and father[3]	-	-	1.1	-
Other	4.2	3.7	6.5	5.1

- Represents zero or a number that rounds to zero.

[1]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
[2]Children living with one biological parent and one adoptive parent have been placed in a biological parent/stepparent category.
[3]Foster relationships only include official placements by a government agency or representative of a government agency.

Children in Blended Families

In this report, a child lived in a blended family or blended household if he or she lived with at least one stepparent, stepsibling, and/or half-sibling. A stepparent is the spouse of the child's natural mother or father, but lacks biological ties to the child. In this section, as in the previous one, parents who have adopted their stepchildren are considered stepparents, not adoptive

[8]Respondents were asked to identify foster relationships as those that involved an official placement by a government agency or a representative of a government agency. We assume, however, that some respondents also reported children who were informally fostered.

[9]The data contained in table 7 are estimates based on questions that ask the respondent to identify a parent-child relationship as biological, step, foster, or adoptive. Earlier Census Bureau reports published indirect estimates based on the 1990 Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS and the SIPP yield very different results. Overall, the direct question used in the SIPP produces an estimate of children living with a biological mother and stepfather that is one-half as large as the estimates obtained indirectly using birth and marital histories from the CPS. The difference is particularly pronounced for Black children: the SIPP estimates that 8 percent of Black children in two-parent families lived with a biological mother and stepfather, compared with 31 percent from the CPS. Correspondingly, the proportion of Black children in two-parent families who lived with two biological parents is far higher in the SIPP than in the CPS (81 percent compared with 64 percent). Also, the SIPP produces lower estimates of children with two adoptive parents than does the CPS (974,000 compared with 582,000 from the SIPP).

It seems likely that estimates of the number of step relationships from the CPS are more accurate than estimates from the SIPP, to the extent that couples have children within marriage. The methodology used with the CPS, however, does not recognize as two biological parents those couples who delay marriage until after the birth of their child, or who never marry but cohabit. In the 1996 SIPP panel, new procedures will be adopted to improve the identification of step relationships.

Source for 1990 CPS data: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, P23-180, *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the 1990's*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1992. For information on indirect estimation techniques using the CPS, see: Louisa F. Miller and Jeanne E. Moorman. "Married Couple Families With Children" in *Studies in Marriage and the Family*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 162, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1989.

[10]Please refer to the section, "Adopted Children" for estimates of related versus unrelated adoptions.

[11]The SIPP estimates that in 1991 there were 207,000 foster children under age 18 (0.31 percent of all children), of which 195,000 lived with two foster parents. The remaining children lived with a single foster parent. We discourage researchers from using the 1991 SIPP to study foster children since extremely few cases were present in the file.

[12]Black children in two-parent families were slightly less likely to live with both biological parents and, consequently, more likely to live with foster or adoptive parents.

parents. Half-siblings share only one biological parent, whereas stepsiblings do not have any biological parents in common.

Before discussing the composition of blended families in detail, we examine the extent to which children lived with stepparents, stepsiblings, and half-siblings. When we look at all children, we find that more lived with a half-sibling (11 percent) than with a stepparent (7 percent) or a stepsibling (1 percent) (table 3). Please note that these categories are not mutually exclusive—they represent children living with "at least one" of the relatives specified. Although the patterns for White children were similar to those found for all children, Blacks (4 percent) were less likely to live with a stepparent, as were Hispanic children (6 percent), and more likely to live with a half-sibling (16 percent). Hispanic children (11 percent) were as likely as all children to live with a half-sibling.

In 1991, 9.8 million children lived in a blended family, a home in which at least one stepparent, stepsibling, or half-sibling was present (table 4). Although children living in a blended family represented 15 percent of all children, this reflects only the composition of the household in which they lived, not the complete network of family ties. A somewhat higher percentage of Black children lived in a blended family (20 percent) than did White or Hispanic children (14 percent).[13]

Table 4 also shows the distribution of children in blended families by all possible combinations of step- and half-relatives who were present in the home. Among children living in blended families, the most common situation, regardless of race or ethnicity, was the one in which children lived with at least one half-sibling, but with neither a stepparent nor a stepsibling (50 percent or 5 million children). Black children in blended families, in particular, were far more likely to live with a half-sibling only (71 percent) than were White (45 percent) or Hispanic children in blended families (58 percent). An additional one-fifth of children in blended families lived with a stepparent only (2.1 million), and, similarly, another one-fifth lived with a stepparent and a half-sibling (1.8 million). Few children in blended families lived with a stepsibling only (2 percent) or in the remaining categories shown in table 4.

Surprisingly, children living in one-parent families were about as likely to live in a blended family as were children in two-parent families (16 percent and 15 percent, respectively) (figure 3 and table 5). There are only slight differences in these proportions by race. The proportion of White children in one-parent families living in a blended family (11 percent) is slightly smaller than the comparable measure for those in two-parent families (15 percent). Black children in one-parent families were somewhat more likely to live in a blended family than their counterparts in two-parent families (24 percent and 19 percent). No difference was found for Hispanic children.

Adopted Children

It is very difficult to determine how many adopted children live in the United States. Since a comprehensive federal registry system for adoptions does not yet exist, we must rely on surveys such as the SIPP to

[13]The proportion of White and Hispanic children living in a blended family (14 percent) does not differ from that of all children (15 percent).

Table 3. Children by Presence of Nuclear Family Members, by Type of Relationship, Race, and Hispanic Origin: Summer 1991

[Numbers in thousands]

Living arrangements	All races		White		Black		Hispanic origin[1]	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All children under 18 years	65,727	100.0	51,944	100.0	10,571	100.0	7,525	100.0
Presence of Parent								
Living with at least one parent	63,574	96.7	50,914	98.0	9,600	90.8	7,163	95.2
Living with at least one stepparent[2]	4,594	7.0	3,972	7.6	431	4.1	418	5.6
Neither parent is present	2,153	3.3	1,030	2.0	971	9.2	362	4.8
Presence of Brothers and Sisters								
Living with at least one sibling	49,728	75.7	39,607	76.2	7,661	72.5	5,956	79.1
Living with at least one stepsibling	980	1.5	639	1.2	289	2.7	53	0.7
Living with at least one half-sibling	6,989	10.6	4,986	9.6	1,714	16.2	813	10.8
Living with no brothers or sisters	15,999	24.3	12,337	23.8	2,910	27.5	1,569	20.9

- Represents zero or a number that rounds to zero.

[1]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

[2]Children living with one biological parent and one adoptive parent are considered to live with a stepparent in order to be consistent with survey instructions.

Table 4. Children Living in Blended Families, by Composition of Family, Race, and Hispanic Origin: Summer 1991

[Numbers in thousands]

Living arrangements	All races	White	Black	Hispanic origin[1]
Children living in a blended family	9,807	7,298	2,101	1,016
Percent of all children under 18 years	14.9	14.0	19.9	13.5
Type of blended family:				
Stepparent only[2]	2,068	1,848	152	166
Stepsibling only	235	55	173	5
Half-sibling only	4,966	3,271	1,485	593
Stepparent and stepsibling	517	409	62	32
Stepparent and half-sibling	1,794	1,540	176	203
Stepsibling and half-sibling	13	-	13	-
Stepparent, stepsibling, and half-sibling	216	175	40	16
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Stepparent only[2]	21.1	25.3	7.2	16.3
Stepsibling only	2.4	0.8	8.2	0.5
Half-sibling only	50.6	44.8	70.7	58.4
Stepparent and stepsibling	5.3	5.6	3.0	3.1
Stepparent and half-sibling	18.3	21.1	8.4	20.0
Stepsibling and half-sibling	-	-	0.6	-
Stepparent, stepsibling, and half-sibling	2.2	2.4	1.9	1.6

- Represents zero or a number that rounds to zero.

[1]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

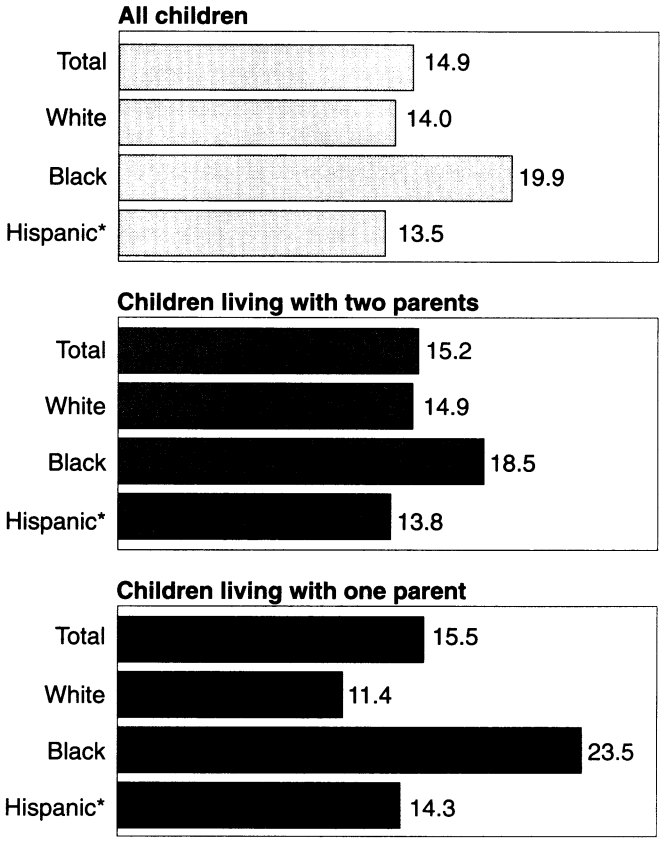
[2]Children living with one biological parent and one adoptive parent are considered to live with a stepparent in order to be consistent with survey instructions

provide this information.[14] Certainly our figure underestimates the true number of adoptions, particularly children who were adopted by a stepparent. In the SIPP, respondents were instructed to identify parents who were both step- and adoptive as stepparents, though

Figure 3.

Children Living in Blended Families: Summer 1991

(In percent)



*Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: Table 4 and 5.

Table 5. Children Living in Blended Families by Presence of Parents, Race, and Hispanic Origin: Summer 1991

[Numbers in thousands]

Living arrangements	Living with—		
	Two parents	One parent	Neither parent
All races	47,826	15,748	1,788
Living in a blended family	7,249	2,448	110
Percent in a blended family	15.2	15.5	6.2
White	40,995	9,919	854
Living in a blended family	6,120	1,135	43
Percent in a blended family	14.9	11.4	5.0
Black	4,404	5,196	832
Living in a blended family	813	1221	68
Percent in a blended family	18.5	23.5	8.2
Hispanic origin[1]	4,826	2,337	210
Living in a blended family	668	334	13
Percent in a blended family	13.8	14.3	6.2

[1]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

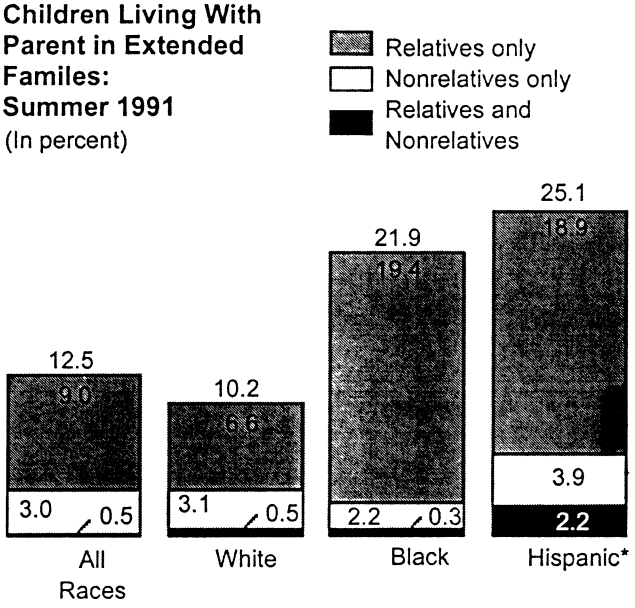
[14]Christine Bachrach and colleagues estimate that 1.1 million children were adopted (in any year) based on information collected from 20-54 year old women responding to the 1987 National Health Interview Survey. Citations for earlier articles by Bachrach using the National Survey of Family Growth can be found at the end of that report. Please refer to the National Committee For Adoption's *Factbook* for information on adoption at the state level. For a recent discussion of data sources, see Kathy Stolley's chapter, "Statistics on Adoption in the United States," in *The Future of Children: Adoption.*

Bachrach, C.A.,Adams, P.F., Sambrano, S., and London, K.A. *Advance data: Adoption in the 1980's.* Advance data from vital and health statistics; no 181. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 1990.

National Committee For Adoption. *1989 Adoption Factbook: United States Data, Issues, Regulations, and Resources.* Washington, D.C., National Committee For Adoption, 1989.

Behrman, Richard E., M.D. *The Future of Children: Adoption.* Vol. 3, No. 1. Los Altos, CA: Center for the Future of Children, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, 1993.

Figure 4.
Children Living With Parent in Extended Familes: Summer 1991
(In percent)



* Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
Source: Table 7.

Table 6. Adopted Children by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Living Arrangements: Summer 1991

[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristics	Number	Percent
Adopted children	1,062	100.0
Race:		
White	805	75.8
Black	130	12.2
Other	127	12.0
Hispanic origin[1]:		
Hispanic	65	6.1
Not Hispanic	997	93.9
Living arrangements:		
Two parents	936	88.1
Two adoptive parents	581	54.7
One adoptive and one biological	324	30.5
One adoptive and one other	31	2.9
One parent	126	11.9
Mother only	110	10.4
Father only	16	1.5

[1]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

some reported an adoptive relationship. For consistency, children who lived with one biological parent and one adoptive parent were recoded as stepchildren in the two previous sections. Here, however, we accept the original response and consider them as related adoptions, children who have been adopted by a stepparent. Respondents were also asked to identify only legal adoptions, though surely some also included informal adoptions. With these qualifications, we estimate that 1.1 million children lived with at least one adoptive parent in 1991 (table 6). One-half of all adopted children lived with two adoptive parents, and one-third lived with one biological and one adoptive parent. Twelve percent of all adopted children lived with single parents.

In general, we do not encourage the use of the SIPP to study adopted children, simply because too few cases exist to permit much beyond the level of description shown in table 6. Anything more complex, even a cross-tabulation of this group by age, race, and sex, will almost certainly produce estimates that are too small to be reliable.

The Extended Family: An Overview

A variety of factors influence whether or not a household is extended. Among the most important are economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and the shortage of affordable housing, but cultural factors must also be considered.[15] In this report, we identify a child as living in an extended family if at least one parent as well as someone beyond the nuclear family (related or unrelated to the child) also lived in the household. In this section, the term "nuclear family" refers to a family composed only of a child's parent(s) and siblings. Parent-child and sibling relationships may be biological, step-, half-, adoptive, or foster. (In contrast, the traditional nuclear family definition used earlier in this report required that all parental and sibling ties be biological.) This definition excludes 1.8 million children who lived in a household with neither parent, but with at least one relative or non-relative.

In 1991, 8.0 million children lived in extended families, representing 12.5 percent of all children living with at least one parent (figure 4 and table 7). White children were half as likely to live in an extended family as Black and Hispanic children (10 percent, 22 percent, and 25 percent, respectively).

Figure 4 also shows the relationship of extended household members to the child. Of all children living with at least one parent, 9 percent lived with extended household members who were relatives only (e.g., grandparents, in-laws, aunts, uncles). Far fewer children lived with nonrelatives only (3 percent), and less than one percent lived with both relatives and nonrelatives. Black (19 percent) and Hispanic children (19 percent) were more likely to live in a household extended by relatives only than were White children (7 percent). Small proportions of White, Black, and Hispanic children lived with nonrelatives only or with both relatives and nonrelatives.

[15]For a recent review of research on African-American extended families, please see Steven Ruggles, "The Origins of African-American Family Structure," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 59 (February 1994), pp. 136-151.

Table 7. Children Living in Extended Families, by Relationship of Household Members to Child, Race, and Hispanic Origin: Summer 1991

[Numbers in thousands]

Living arrangements	Children living with one or both parents									
	Total		Two parents		One parent					
					Total		Mother only		Father only	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All races	63,754	100.0	47,826	100.0	15,748	100.0	13,955	100.0	1,793	100.0
Children living in an extended household	7,951	12.5	3,235	6.8	4,716	29.9	4,092	29.3	624	34.8
Relationship of extended household members to child:										
Relatives only	5,749	9.0	2,594	5.4	3,155	20.0	2,803	20.1	352	19.6
Nonrelatives only	1,891	3.0	542	1.1	1,349	8.6	1,099	7.9	250	13.9
Both	313	0.5	100	-	213	1.4	191	1.4	22	1.2
White	50,914	100.0	40,995	100.0	9,919	100.0	8,503	100.0	1,416	100.0
Children living in an extended household	5,210	10.2	2,350	5.7	2,861	28.8	2,383	28.0	478	33.8
Relationship of extended household members to child:										
Relatives only	3,373	6.6	1,827	4.5	1,546	15.6	1,277	15.0	269	19.0
Nonrelatives only	1,582	3.1	423	1.0	1,159	11.7	960	11.3	199	14.1
Both	255	0.5	100	-	155	1.6	145	1.7	10	0.7
Black	9,600	100.0	4,404	100.0	5,196	100.0	4,938	100.0	258	100.0
Children living in an extended household	2,100	21.9	444	10.1	1,656	31.9	1,550	31.4	106	41.1
Relationship of extended household members to child:										
Relatives only	1,861	19.4	389	8.8	1,473	28.3	1,411	28.6	62	24.0
Nonrelatives only	208	2.2	55	1.2	154	3.0	116	2.3	38	14.7
Both	30	-	-	-	30	0.6	23	0.5	7	2.7
Hispanic origin[1]	7,163	100.0	4,826	100.0	2,337	100.0	2,141	100.0	196	100.0
Children living in an extended household	1,795	25.1	858	17.8	937	40.1	820	38.3	117	59.7
Relationship of extended household members to child:										
Relatives only	1,357	18.9	649	13.4	708	30.3	626	29.2	82	41.8
Nonrelatives only	279	3.9	144	3.0	136	5.8	100	4.7	36	18.4
Both	160	2.2	65	1.3	95	4.1	95	4.4	-	-

- Represents zero or a number that rounds to zero.

[1]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

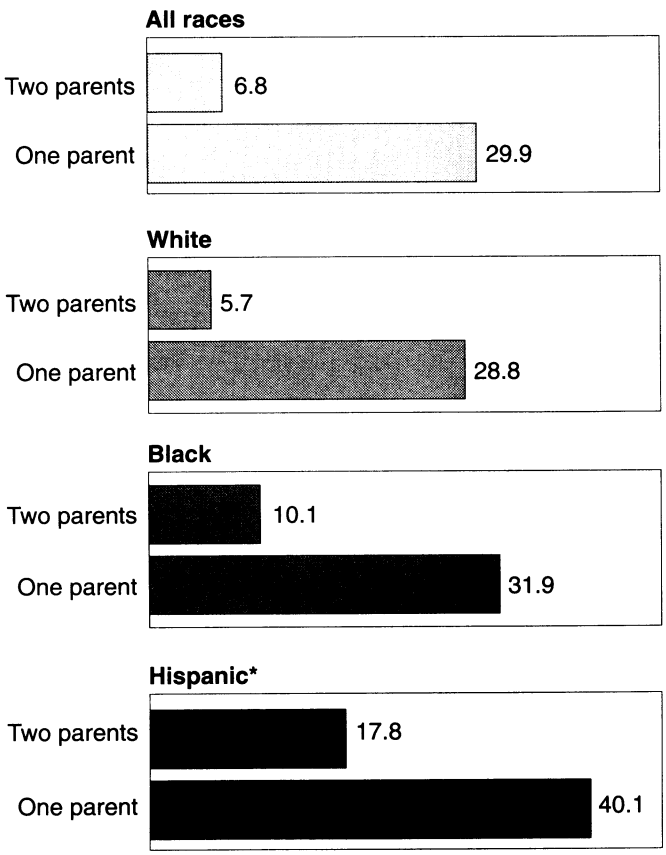
Are children more likely to live in an extended family if they live with one parent rather than with two parents? The difference illustrated in figure 5 is striking: Children in one-parent families were four times more likely to live in an extended family than were children living with two parents (30 percent compared with 7 percent). Very large differences are found when we examine each racial and ethnic group separately, although, except for White children, they are not of the same magnitude as that found for children in general. The likelihood of living in an extended family was about five times greater for White children in one-parent families (29 percent) than for those who lived with two parents (6 percent). In contrast, 32 percent of Black children living with a single parent also lived in an extended family, compared with 10 percent of those in two-parent families. Hispanic children were twice as likely to live in an extended family if they lived with one parent (40 percent) rather than with two parents (18 percent).

Finally, we compare the types of extended family members living in a household by whether children lived with one or two parents. Among children in two-parent families, 5 percent lived in households that included other relatives only, and an additional 1 percent lived with at least one nonrelative. Black and Hispanic children (9 percent and 14 percent) were roughly two to three times as likely as Whites (5 percent) to live in a household extended by other relatives. When we turn to children living with one parent, we find that 20 percent lived in a household extended by relatives only, 9

Figure 5.

Children Living in Extended Families by Presence of Parents: Summer 1991

(In percent)



*Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: Table 7.

percent lived with nonrelatives only, and 1 percent lived with both relatives and nonrelatives. Among children in one-parent families, Whites (16 percent) were less likely than Blacks (28 percent) or, similarly, Hispanics (30 percent) to live with relatives only. However, White children in one-parent families (12 percent) were more likely than either Black (3 percent) or Hispanic (6 percent) children to live with nonrelatives only.

Additional Adults in Single-Parent Households. Table 8 presents estimates of the number of children who lived in single-parent households that were extended by at least one additional adult. Such adults represent potential sources of household support, with contributions including financial assistance and child care. Since households are extended if they include anyone beyond the nuclear family (i.e., someone who is not the child's parent, brother, or sister), we do not consider a child's adult brother or sister to be an "additional adult" in this section. First, we discuss the extent to which children in one-parent families lived in households that included adults of the **opposite** sex (e.g., children living with a single mother and at least one adult male), then we turn to single-parent families in which the additional adult is of the ***same*** sex as the parent.

One out of every five children (20 percent) in single-mother families lived with at least one adult male in the household, although this occurred more frequently among Whites (23 percent) and, similarly, Hispanics (21 percent) than among Blacks (14 percent) (table 8). Ten percent of all children in single-mother families lived with at least one male relative, 7 percent lived with a male nonrelative, and 3 percent lived with a male of unknown relation. (Please note that these categories are not mutually exclusive; for example, children living with a relative and a nonrelative were included in both categories.) Of all children who lived with a single mother, the proportion who, in addition, resided with at least one adult male relative in the home was similar for Whites (10 percent), Blacks (11 percent), and Hispanics (13 percent). In contrast, White children in mother-only families were more likely than Blacks to have at least one unrelated adult in the household (11 percent and 2 percent). Although our data do not allow us to determine what proportion of the single mothers and unrelated men were unmarried partners, we assume that many were cohabitors. Beginning in 1996 the SIPP will more explicitly identify such relationships.[16]

In contrast, children living with a single father were twice as likely as children in single-mother families (37 percent and 20 percent, respectively) to live with an adult of the opposite sex of the parent (table 8). Among White children, one-third lived with a single father and at least one adult female, but the values for Black and Hispanic children are unreliable because of small sample sizes. Approximately one-fifth (19 percent) of children in single-father families lived with at least one adult female relative, 13 percent lived with an unrelated adult female, and 6 percent lived with a female of unknown relation.[17]

Children in mother-only families are extremely similar to their counterparts in father-only families in the proportions living with an additional adult of the **same** sex as the parent. (19 percent) (table 9). Moreover, the two groups did not differ in the terms of how each additional adult was related to the child: 16 percent of children in single-mother homes lived with at least one female

[16]For a discussion of the extent to which cohabitation patterns affect the classification of women and children in single-parent families, see L. L. Bumpass and R. K. Raley, "Trends in the Duration of Single-Parent Families." NSFH Working Paper No. 58 (1993), National Survey of Families and Households, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

[17]The proportion of children who lived with a single mother and an adult male (related or unrelated) does not differ from the proportion of children who lived with a single father and at least one adult female relative present in the household.

Table 8. Children Living with Single Parents, by Presence of Adults of the Opposite Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: Summer 1991

[Numbers in thousands]

Living arrangements	All races		White		Black		Hispanic origin[1]	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Living with mother only	13,955	100.0	8,503	100.0	4,938	100.0	2,141	100.0
Presence of at least one adult male, other than brothers	2,816	20.2	2,023	23.8	696	14.1	458	21.4
Relationship of adult male to child:								
Living with at least one—								
Relative	1,455	10.4	853	10.0	520	10.5	279	13.0
Nonrelative	1,018	7.3	902	10.6	110	2.2	145	6.8
Relationship unknown	401	2.9	320	3.8	73	1.5	34	1.6
Living with father only	1,793	100.0	1,416	100.0	258	100.0	196	100.0
Presence of at least one adult female, other than sisters	661	36.9	500	35.3	121	46.9	131	66.8
Relationship of adult female to child:								
Living with at least one—								
Relative	342	19.1	255	18.0	61	23.6	82	41.8
Nonrelative	227	12.7	171	12.1	38	14.7	36	18.4
Relationship unknown	114	6.4	85	6.0	21	8.1	13	6.6

[1]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Table 9. Children Living with Single Parents, by Presence of Adults of Same Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: Summer 1991

[Numbers in thousands]

Living arrangements	All races		White		Black		Hispanic origin[1]	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Living with mother only	13,955	100.0	8,503	100.0	4,938	100.0	2,141	100.0
Presence of at least one adult female, other than mother or sisters	2,639	18.9	1,429	16.8	1,085	22.0	558	26.1
Relationship of adult female to child:								
Living with at least one—								
Relative	2,283	16.4	1,146	13.5	1,035	21.0	511	23.9
Nonrelative	289	2.1	237	2.8	13	-	96	4.5
Relationship unknown	181	1.3	138	1.6	36	0.7	31	1.4
Living with father only	1,793	100.0	1,416	100.0	258	100.0	196	100.0
Presence of at least one adult male, other than father or brothers	335	18.7	256	18.1	52	20.2	54	27.6
Relationship of adult male to child:								
Living with at least one—								
Relative	258	14.4	185	13.1	46	17.8	48	24.5
Nonrelative	50	2.8	43	3.0	7	2.7	-	-
Relationship unknown	34	1.9	28	2.0	6	2.3	6	3.1

- Represents zero or a number that rounds to zero.

[1]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

relative, and 14 percent of those in single-father homes lived with at least one male relative.

Additional Relatives by Detailed Type. Which relatives do children in extended families most frequently live with? One might imagine that these households most often include grandparents, and this is indeed what is shown in table 10. (Note: the categories in table 10 are not mutually exclusive.) Regardless of race or origin, 46 percent of children in extended families lived with at least one grandparent, and more children lived with only a grandmother (25 percent) than with both a grandmother and a grandfather (17 percent). Approximately three times as many Black and Hispanic children lived with one grandparent as with two grandparents, compared with 1.5 times as many for Whites.

Of the 8.0 million children living in an extended family, similar proportions lived with at least one uncle (19 percent) or an aunt (20 percent). Another one-fifth lived with a cousin, although the proportion was particularly large for Black children, about one-third of whom lived with a cousin (35 percent).

Multi-generational Households. Many children living in extended families also live in multi-generational households. In 1991, 3.8 million children lived in three- or four generation families, almost all of whom lived with a parent and a grandparent (96 percent, table 11). The remaining children lived with a parent and an own child, with a grandparent and an own child, or in a four-generation household.

If all children are considered, not only those in extended families, 4.7 million lived with a grandparent (7 percent of all children under 18) (table 12). One million children were raised by their grandparents without a parent present in the household, constituting about one-fourth of all children living with a grandparent. The largest proportion of children living with grandparents, however, lived with single mothers (40 percent); 31 percent lived with both parents.

The proportion of children living with a grandparent differs by race and Hispanic origin. Black children were three times more likely than were White children to live with a grandparent (15 percent compared with 5 percent); Hispanic children were twice as likely as Whites to live with a grandparent (12 percent). Among Black children living with a grandparent, the overwhelming majority had either one or neither parent in the household (93 percent). In contrast, approximately 60 percent of White and Hispanic children lived in a home with a grandparent and one or neither parent.

When children live with their parents and grandparents, which generation is the householder? The results are quite different depending on whether the children live with one or both parents. According to table 12, among children living in three-generation, two-parent families, less than half lived in the grandparent's home (38 percent), but 81 percent of children living in three-generation, one-parent families lived in the grandparent's home. Does this suggest, then, that in multi-generational households, two-parent families may be more likely to provide care to the older generation, whereas single mothers and fathers may be more apt to obtain support from their own parents? This pattern, while certainly intriguing, cannot be supported by the information shown in table 12. This question requires further research at the **family** level; our findings only describe characteristics of children, not of each individual family or household. In other words, since children are the unit of analysis, the characteristics of a five-child family are represented five times in table 12, whereas an only child is represented only once.

Table 10. Children Living in Extended Families, by Type of Relative Present, Race, and Hispanic Origin: Summer 1991

[Numbers in thousands]

Living arrangements	All races	White	Black	Hispanic origin[1]
Total children in extended families[2]	7,951	5,210	2,100	1,795
Living with at least one—				
Grandmother and grandfather	1,323	914	280	197
Grandmother only	2,004	1,137	680	532
Grandfather only	312	257	49	79
Uncle	1,506	825	438	513
Aunt	1,567	868	512	542
Nephew	451	196	231	143
Niece	486	182	276	167
Father-in-law	15	5	9	-
Mother-in-law	13	7	-	-
Brother-in-law	32	19	-	4
Sister-in-law	86	64	18	24
Cousin	1,704	788	729	461
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Grandmother and grandfather	16.6	17.5	13.3	11.0
Grandmother only	25.2	21.8	32.4	29.6
Grandfather only	3.9	4.9	2.3	4.4
Uncle	18.9	15.8	20.9	28.6
Aunt	19.7	16.7	24.4	30.2
Nephew	5.7	3.8	11.0	8.0
Niece	6.1	3.5	13.1	9.3
Father-in-law	-	-	-	-
Mother-in-law	-	-	-	-
Brother-in-law	-	-	-	-
Sister-in-law	1.1	1.2	0.9	1.3
Cousin	21.4	15.1	34.7	25.7

- Represents zero or a number that rounds to zero.

[1]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

[2]At least one parent lives in the household.

RELATED REPORTS

Additional information on the living arrangements of children is presented in Current Population Reports, Series P20-478, *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1993*. Based on the Current Population Survey, this report includes more detail on the age of the children and characteristics of their parents. *We, the American Children*, WE-10, provides a brief summary of

Table 11. Children Living in Multi-generational Households, by Race and Hispanic Origin: Summer 1991

[Numbers in thousands]

Living arrangements	All races	White	Black	Hispanic origin[1]
Children living in multi-generational households	3,775	2,378	1,077	831
Percent of all children under 18 years	5.7	4.6	10.2	11.0
With parent and grandparent	3,634	2,304	1,009	808
With parent and own child	127	66	61	23
Other[2]	14	8	7	-
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
With parent and grandparent	96.3	96.9	93.7	97.2
With parent and own child	3.4	2.8	5.7	2.8
Other[2]	-	-	0.6	-

- Represents zero or a number that rounds to zero.

[1]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
[2]Children living in four-generation households or with a grandparent and an own child.

Table 12. Children Living with Grandparents, by Race and Hispanic Origin: Summer 1991

[Numbers in thousands]

Living arrangements	All races	White	Black	Hispanic origin[1]
Children living with at least one grandparent	4,737	2,777	1,580	908
Percent of all children under 18 years	7.2	5.3	14.9	12.1
Presence of parents:				
Living with both parents	1,459	1,112	118	336
Grandparent is the householder	555	454	63	82
Percent	38.0	40.8	53.4	24.4
Living with mother only	1,876	971	839	396
Grandparent is the householder	1,520	837	651	280
Percent	81.0	86.2	77.6	70.7
Living with father only	303	225	53	76
Grandparent is the householder	255	189	47	65
Percent	84.2	84.0	88.7	85.5
Living with neither parent	1,099	469	570	100
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Living with both parents	30.8	40.0	7.5	37.0
Living with mother only	39.6	35.0	53.1	43.6
Living with father only	6.4	8.1	3.4	8.4
Living with neither parent	23.2	16.9	36.1	11.0

[1]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

demographic and economic information pertaining to children from the 1990 Census. A chartbook illustrating demographic, social and economic trends that have influenced the characteristics of households and families (with special emphasis on children) is available in *Households, Families and Children: A Thirty Year Perspective*, Current Population Reports, Series P23-181.

Detailed statistics on household type and composition for 1993 and historical data back to 1947 on households and families by type are presented in Series P-20, No. 477, *Household and Family Characteristics: March 1993*. Projections for the United States of the number of households and families were published in Series P-25, No. 986, *Projections of the Number of Households and Families: 1986 to 2000*, but are currently being updated.

Estimates of the number and characteristics of household and families that remain intact, dissolve, and/or are newly formed over 1-year and 2-year periods are presented in Current Population Reports, Series P23-179, *When Households Continue, Discontinue, and Form*. The most up-to-date information on the recent marital history of the population may be found in Current Population Reports, Series P23-180, *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the 1990's*.

USER COMMENTS

We are interested in your reaction to the usefulness of the information presented here, and welcome recommendations for improving our survey work. If you have suggestions or comments, please complete the attached user survey form in front of the report and mail as indicated.