

2023

FP-23-01 Prevalence of Grandparenthood in the U.S.

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Westrick-Payne, Krista K., "FP-23-01 Prevalence of Grandparenthood in the U.S." (2023). *National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles*. 302.

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Family Profile No. 01, 2023

Prevalence of Grandparenthood in the U.S.

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In 2021, approximately 63.5 million adults age 50 and older were grandparents, according to the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). The SIPP is a nationally representative household-based survey and is designed to provide comprehensive family and social information on individuals and families. Because the SIPP gathers information on all individuals who lived in a surveyed household, and directly asks respondents if they are a grandparent, it is one of the few surveys that identifies non-resident grandparents. In this profile, we identify the prevalence of grandparenthood among adults aged 50 and older and examine their demographic characteristics including race/ ethnicity, educational attainment, and current relationship status. This profile is an update of [Stykes, Manning, & Brown, 2014](#) and [Wu, 2018](#). It is also the first in our series on grandparents in the U.S.

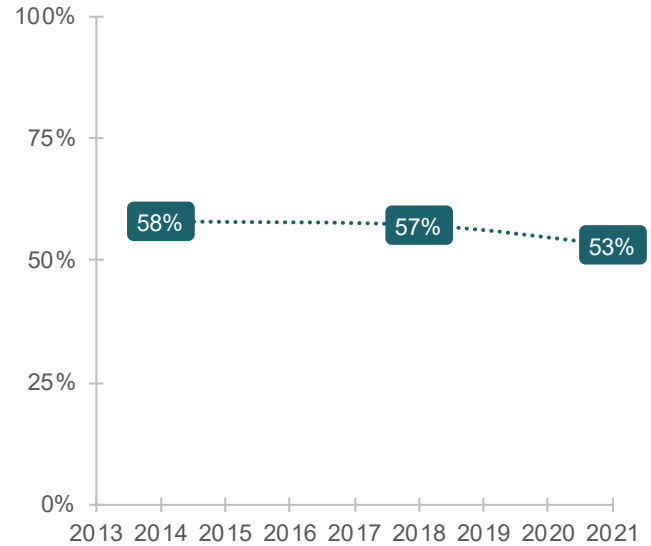
- The share of older adults who report having a grandchild has declined in recent years from 58% of those aged 50 and older in 2014 to 53% in 2021.

Race/ Ethnicity and Grandparenthood

- Among adults aged 50 and older, a greater percentage of Black older adults were grandparents (56%) than those of other racial/ ethnic backgrounds in 2021.
- With only slightly smaller shares, 54% of Hispanic older adults and 53% of White respondents aged 50 and older were also grandparents.
- Those of Asian ethnicity had the smallest share reporting to be a grandparent—only about two-fifths said they had a grandchild.

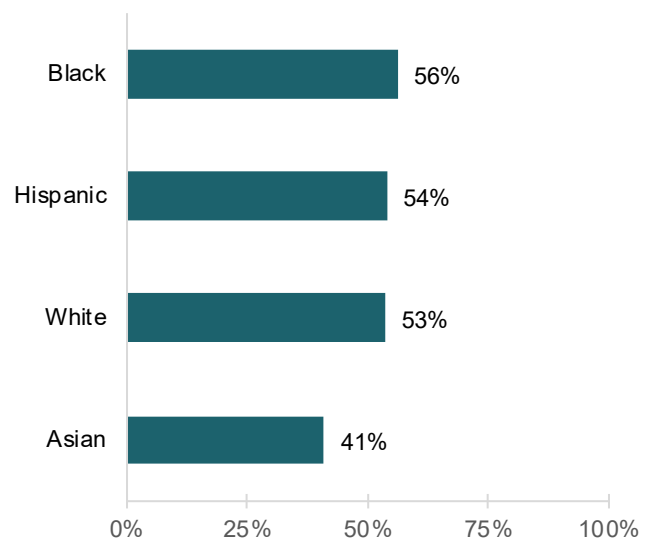
While the number of grandparents has increased from 62 million in 2018 to 63.5 million in 2021, the share has dropped from 57% to 53% of those aged 50 and older.

Figure 1. Trend in Grandparenthood in the U.S., 2014, 2018, and 2021



Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2014, 2018, & 2021

Figure 2. Grandparenthood by Race/ Ethnicity, 2021

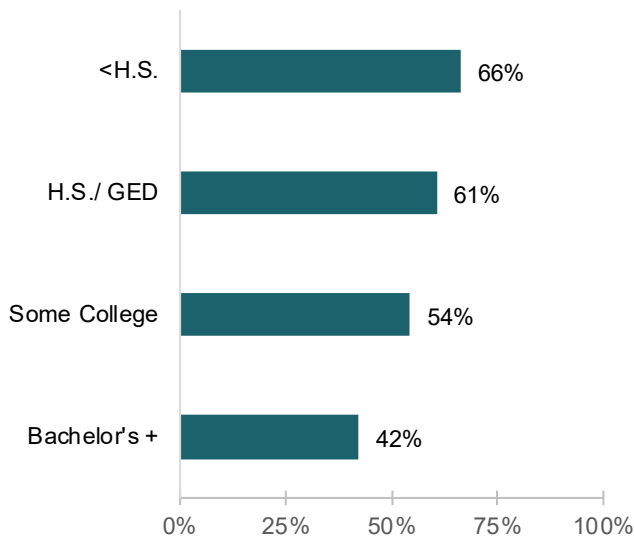


Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2021

Educational Attainment and Grandparenthood

- The prevalence of grandparenthood decreased as educational attainment increased.
- Among those aged 50 or older in 2021 without a high school diploma/ GED, two-thirds were grandparents.
- Sixty-one percent of those with a high school diploma and 54% of those with some college were grandparents in 2021.
- Being a grandparent was least common among older adults who had at least a bachelor's degree (42%).

Figure 3. Grandparenthood by Educational Attainment, 2021



Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2021

Data Source:

U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation 2014, Wave 1, 2018, and 2021.

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp.html>

References:

Stykes, B., Manning, W. D., & Brown, S. L. (2014). Grandparenthood in the U.S.: Prevalence of grandparenthood among adults aged 50+. *Family Profiles, FP-14-14*. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research.

<https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/college-of-arts-and-sciences/NCFMR/documents/FP/FP-14-14-grandparent-50-plus.pdf>

Wu, H. (2018). Prevalence of grandparenthood in the U.S. *Family Profiles, FP-18-03*. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-18-03>

Suggested Citation:

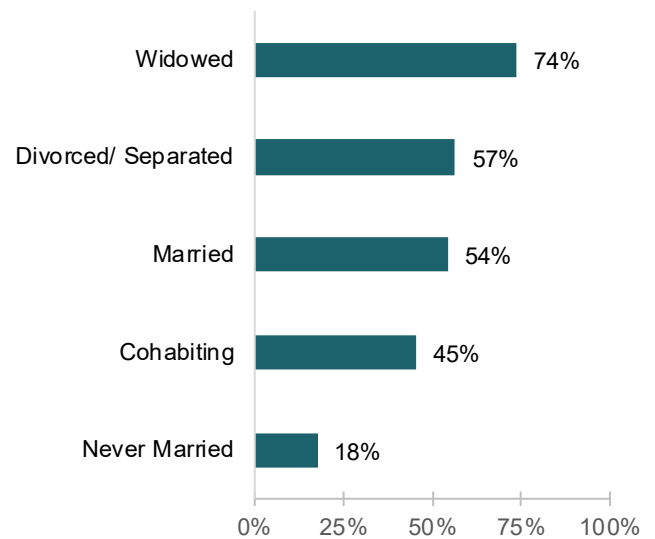
Westrick-Payne, K. K. (2023). Prevalence of grandparenthood in the U.S., 2021. *Family Profile, FP-23-01*. National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-23-01>

This project is supported with assistance from Bowling Green State University. From 2007 to 2013, support was also provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the author(s) and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the state or federal government.

Relationship Status and Grandparenthood

- Being a grandparent was most common among widowed adults, at 74%. This is not unexpected because the widowed are more often older.
- Similar shares of married and divorced/ separated adults were grandparents (57% and 54%, respectively).
- Slightly less than half (45%) of cohabiting adults aged 50 and older were grandparents.
- About one in five (18%) of never married older adults reported being a grandparent.

Figure 4. Grandparenthood by Relationship Status, 2021



Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2021