

# Children's Family Structure in California

## Households with Children: 2014-2018; Showing Counties Living Arrangement for Children, by Race/Ethnicity: 2018-2019

United States	Percent		
Race/Ethnicity	Two Parents Present	Mother Present Only	Father Present Only
African American/Black	40.6%	47.0%	5.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	85.6%	9.6%	2.3%
Hispanic/Latino	67.6%	24.5%	4.1%
White	77.9%	14.2%	4.6%

California	Percent		
Race/Ethnicity	Two Parents Present	Mother Present Only	Father Present Only
African American/Black	44.3%	40.5%	7.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	84.5%	9.3%	2.7%
Hispanic/Latino	70.4%	21.7%	4.0%
White	79.8%	13.4%	4.7%

**Definition:** Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 living in households with and without parents present, by child's race/ethnicity (e.g., in 2018-2019, 70.4% of Hispanic/Latino children in California were in living arrangements with two parents present).

**Data Source:** Population Reference Bureau, analysis of U.S. Census Bureau [Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement](#) public use microdata (Jan. 2020).

### What It Is

On kidsdata.org, measures of children's family and household structure come from the [American Community Survey](#) and [Current Population Survey](#). Depending on the measure, data are provided as one-, two-, and/or five-year estimates for the nation, state, counties, cities, school districts, and/or legislative districts. The following indicators are available:

- [Households with children ages 0-17](#)
- Children living with parents or other relatives [overall](#) and [by race/ethnicity](#)
- [Children in cohabitating couple households](#)
- [Children in same-sex couple households](#)
- [Children in the care of grandparents](#)

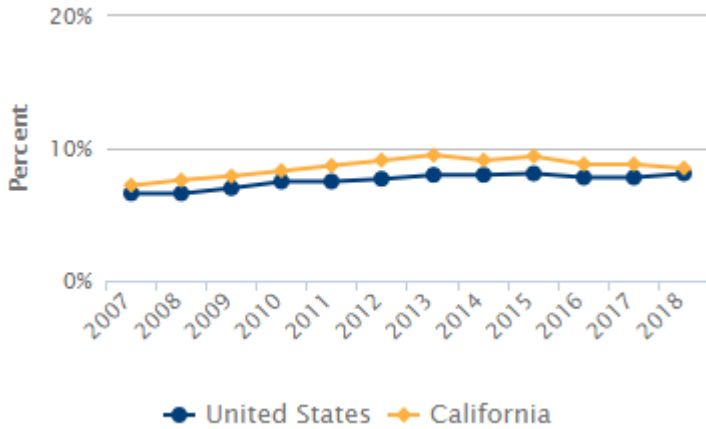
In addition, kidsdata.org's measures of youth housing situation present characteristics of where and with whom students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs live. These estimates come from the [California Healthy Kids Survey](#) and are based on youth self-reports by [grade level](#), [gender](#), [level of school connectedness](#), [parent education level](#), [race/ethnicity](#), and [sexual orientation](#).

### Why This Topic Is Important

Child well being is strongly influenced by the family environment and the presence of caring, stable adults. While children can thrive in any kind of family structure (e.g., in the care of grandparents, single-parents, same-sex parents, etc.), the stability of the family and the nature of family relationships are important factors in child development. Research shows that unstable home environments can adversely affect children's health and well being. Financial stability is important, too, and is linked to family structure. For example, single and cohabiting parents are more likely than married parents to have lower incomes and experience financial difficulty. Financial hardship can cause family stress and hinder the ability to provide the environment and experiences a child needs for optimal cognitive, emotional, and physical development.

Kidsdata.org's family structure topic also includes data on the youth housing situation, which can provide insight into stability and vulnerability in young people's lives. For example, youth living in multi-family (overcrowded) homes, in hotels/motels, or with friends may be homeless or at risk of

### Children in Cohabiting Couple Households



**Definition:** Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 living in households in which the householder resides with their unmarried partner (e.g., in 2018, 8.5% of California children lived in cohabitating couple households).  
**Data Source:** Population Reference Bureau, analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey summary files and public use microdata (Dec. 2019).

#### Youth Housing Situation, by Grade Level: 2017-2019

California	Percent		
	Grade 7	Grade 9	Grade 11
Parent's or Guardian's Home	85.8%	91.0%	92.0%
Other Relative's Home	2.4%	1.9%	1.9%
Friend's Home	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%
Multi-Family Home	6.0%	3.7%	3.5%
Foster or Group Home	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%
Hotel or Motel	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%

**Definition:** Housing situation among public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs (e.g., in 2017-2019, an estimated 6% of California 7th graders lived in multi-family homes).  
**Data Source:** WestEd, California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) & Biennial State CHKS. California Dept. of Education (Aug. 2020).

homelessness. Poverty and housing insecurity put young people at risk of poor health and developmental outcomes throughout their life course. Additionally, youth living in foster care or group homes are a particularly vulnerable population, facing increased risks of emotional, physical, behavioral, and academic problems.

#### How Children Are Faring

In 2018, the estimated share of California households with one or more children ages 0-17 was 33%, down from 38% in 2007. Statewide, 64% of children lived with two parents in 2018, 24% lived with their mother only, 8% with their father only, and 4% with non-parent relatives. Additionally, 9% of children lived in households with unmarried couples (of the same or opposite sex), fewer than 1% in households with same-sex couples (married or unmarried), and 3% in households headed by a grandparent caring for grandchildren.

In California, family structure varies by region and race/ethnicity. Across counties with data in 2014-2018, estimates of children living in two-parent households ranged from 54% to 77%, children in cohabitating couple households from 2% to 14%, and children in the care of grandparents from less than 1% to 8%. Among children in households statewide, fewer than 45% of African American/black children lived with two parents in 2018-2019, compared with at least 80% or Hispanic/Latino and white children.

According to a survey of California youth, more than 85% of students in grades 7, 9, and 11 lived in a home with one or more parents or guardians in 2017-2019. During the same period, fewer than 1 in 15 lived in a home with more than one family, and fewer than 1 in 40 lived in the home of another relative. Students in non-traditional programs, those with low levels of school connectedness, and those whose parents did not finish high school are less likely to live in a parent's or guardian's home than their peers in other groups.

*View references for this text and additional research on this topic:*

<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/8/family-structure/summary>



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