

Adopted Children and Stepchildren: 2000

Issued October 2003

Census 2000 Special Reports

CENSR-6RV

By
Rose M. Kreider

INTRODUCTION

Although many data sources describe the living arrangements and characteristics of children in general, few are large enough to permit the analysis of children by whether they are the biological, adopted, or stepchildren of the householder. Census 2000 included “adopted son/daughter” for the first time in the decennial census as a category of relationship to the householder separate from “natural born son/daughter” and “stepson/stepdaughter” (Figure 1).¹ The adoption category includes various types of adoption, such as: adoption of biologically related and unrelated children, adoption of stepchildren, adoption through private and public agencies, domestic and international adoptions, and independent and informal adoptions. Census 2000 is the principal source of data on adopted children and their families on a national level.² See the Other Sources of Data and Data Quality

¹ The “householder” is a person in whose name the housing unit is owned, being bought, or rented.

² The National Adoption Information Clearinghouse, a service of the Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’

Figure 1.

Reproduction of the Question on Relationship to Householder from Census 2000

2 How is this person related to Person 1?

Mark ☒ ONE box.

- ☐ Husband/wife
- ☐ Natural-born son/daughter
- ☐ Adopted son/daughter
- ☐ Stepson/stepdaughter
- ☐ Brother/sister
- ☐ Father/mother
- ☐ Grandchild
- ☐ Parent-in-law
- ☐ Son-in-law/daughter-in-law
- ☐ Other relative — *Print exact relationship.*

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

If NOT RELATED to Person 1:

- ☐ Roomer, boarder
- ☐ Housemate, roommate
- ☐ Unmarried partner
- ☐ Foster child
- ☐ Other nonrelative

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 questionnaire.

sections of this report for more information about national level data on adopted children and stepchildren.

This report presents information on the characteristics of the 2.1 million adopted children and 4.4 million stepchildren of

Administration for Children and Families, states that there is no current public or private attempt to collect comprehensive national data on adoption, despite sporadic attempts over the last 50 years (See www.calib.com/naic/stats).

Table 1.
Number of Children of Householder by Type of Relationship and Age: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

Relationship	Total, all ages	Under 18 years					18 years and over		
		Total	Under 6	6 to 11	12 to 14	15 to 17	Total	18 to 24	25 and over
Total children of householder	83,714,107	64,651,959	20,120,106	22,803,985	11,200,237	10,527,631	19,062,148	11,185,934	7,876,214
Adopted children	2,058,915	1,586,004	389,296	598,326	316,636	281,746	472,911	273,957	198,954
Stepchildren	4,384,581	3,292,301	328,378	1,271,122	847,130	845,671	1,092,280	778,441	313,839
Biological children	77,270,611	59,773,654	19,402,432	20,934,537	10,036,471	9,400,214	17,496,957	10,133,536	7,363,421
Percent of age group ...	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Adopted children	2.5	2.5	1.9	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.5
Stepchildren	5.2	5.1	1.6	5.6	7.6	8.0	5.7	7.0	4.0
Biological children	92.3	92.5	96.4	91.8	89.6	89.3	91.8	90.6	93.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

householders as estimated from the Census 2000 sample, which collected data from approximately 1 out of every 6 households. Together, these children represented approximately 8 percent of the 84 million sons and daughters of householders in 2000.

HOW ARE CHILDREN IDENTIFIED IN CENSUS 2000?

Biological children, adopted children, and stepchildren are identified in Census 2000 by the answer to the question, "How is this person related to person 1?" Person 1 is always the householder: someone who owns or rents the home. The results shown in this report reflect only people who were identified as children of the householder and were living in the household at the time of the census, rather than all children currently living with their parents. For example, if a married couple lived in the household of one of their parents, their children would be reported as the grandchildren of the householder. Because of situations like this, Census 2000 data cannot provide a comprehensive count of all adopted children and

stepchildren in the United States.³ At the same time, national-level data on adopted children and stepchildren are rare, and the large sample size of Census 2000 makes it the most complete data source on the characteristics of these children and their families and households. The Other Sources of Data section of this report describes several other sources of data on adoption and adopted children.

Because people may have different understandings of what constitutes an "adoptive" or "step" parent-child relationship, Census 2000 data include a variety of types of adoptive and step relationships. These data do not define whether an adoption was of a relative or a nonrelative, or whether the child was adopted through a public agency, a private agency, or

independently. Because of this, we cannot distinguish among children who were adopted by their step-parents, children adopted by their biological grandparents or other relatives, and children adopted by other people to whom they are not biologically related.⁴ Since Census 2000 respondents selected from the relationship categories shown in Figure 1, people recorded as adopted children of the householder may not necessarily be legally adopted.

Informal adoptions are more common among some cultural groups than others, as people differ widely in the way they view family relationships and the process of adoption. For example, a qualitative study prepared for the U.S. Census Bureau found that informal

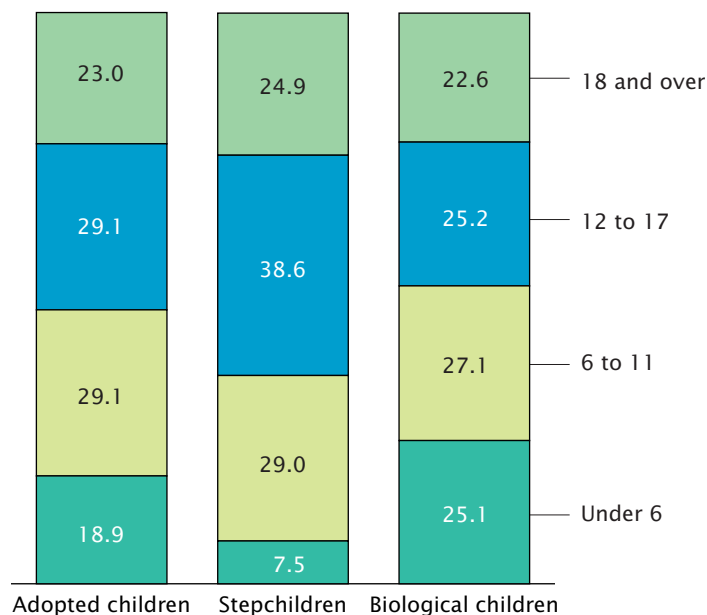
³ It is estimated that Census 2000 may have identified only about two-thirds of all stepchildren living with at least one stepparent because of the manner in which the data were collected. For this reason, characteristics of the stepchildren shown in this report may not represent all stepchildren. See the Data Quality section of this report.

The text of this report discusses data for the United States, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Data for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are shown in Table 2 and Figure 3.

⁴ An estimate for 1992, made from court records, was that about 42 percent of all adoptions were by stepparents or a relative. See Victor Flango and Carol Flango, "How Many Children Were Adopted in 1992," *Child Welfare*, 1995, Vol. LXXIV, No. 5 (Sept.-Oct.), pp. 1018-1024. A 1996 survey of all 50 states and the District of Columbia conducted by the National Council for Adoption, estimated that 50 percent of domestic adoptions were by someone related to the child, including stepparents. See Paul J. Placek, "National Adoption Data," *Adoption Factbook III*, National Council for Adoption: Washington, DC, 1999, pp 24-68.

Figure 2.
Percent Distribution of Children of the Householder by Type of Relationship and Age: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

adoption of biological grandchildren was common in Inupiaq communities in Alaska.⁵ Informal adoptions are also more common among Blacks and Hispanics.⁶

In a similar manner, in Census 2000, householders who listed stepchildren as living in their

households may not always be married to the person who is the biological parent of the stepchild. Most of the 271,000 unmarried male householders who reported having stepchildren in their households also had a female unmarried partner (198,000). It seems unlikely that so many men would have the biological child of their former spouse living with them, and more likely that the "stepchild" is the biological child of the unmarried partner with whom they are currently living. Since the English language does not have a more precise word to describe this kind of relationship, some respondents may have decided to report their partner's child as their stepchild, even though they are not married to the child's biological parent.

HOW MANY ADOPTED CHILDREN AND STEPCHILDREN OF THE HOUSEHOLDER ARE THERE?

In 2000, 1.6 million adopted children of the householder were under age 18, making up 2.5 percent of all children of the householder under 18 (see Table 1). An additional 473,000 adopted children of the householder were aged 18 and over, again representing 2.5 percent of all children of the householder of that age group. In 2000, there were more than twice as many stepchildren (4.4 million) as adopted children (2.1 million),⁷ with stepchildren representing 5 percent of children of the householder.

The distribution of children in different age groups by type of relationship reveals marked differences associated with how the children became members of the household. The age distribution of biological children of the householder up to age 18 is primarily a consequence of the number of babies born each year, which has been relatively constant since the early 1980s.⁸ As a result, the proportions of biological children in each of the three 6-year age groups shown in Figure 2 differ slightly (25 to 27 percent). Percentages were smaller for both adopted children (19 percent) and stepchildren (8 percent) than for biological children (25 percent) under 6 years compared with the older age groups (see Figure 2). These differences probably reflect

⁵ Amy Craver. "Complex Inupiaq Eskimo Households and Relationships in Two Northwest Alaska Rural Communities," Alaska Native Science Commission. University of Alaska, Anchorage, 2001.

⁶ See Christine A. Bachrach, Kathryn A. London, and Penelope L. Maza. "On the Path to Adoption: Adoption Seeking in the United States, 1988," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 1991, Vol. 53, pp. 705-718; and Debra Kalmuss. "Adoption and Black Teenagers: The Viability of a Pregnancy Resolution Strategy," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 1992, Vol. 54, pp. 485-495; and Maria Suarez Hamm. "Latino Adoption Issues," *Adoption Factbook III*. National Council for Adoption: Washington, DC, 1999, pp. 257-260.

⁷ The estimates in this report are based on responses from a sample of the population. As with all surveys, estimates may vary from the actual values because of sampling variation or other factors. All comparisons made in this report have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

⁸ After age 18, leaving home for school, jobs, military service, or to start a household strongly affects the number of children living with their parents, regardless of the type of parent-child relationship.

Table 2.

Number and Percent of Children of the Householder by Type of Relationship for the United States, Regions, and States, and for Puerto Rico: 2000

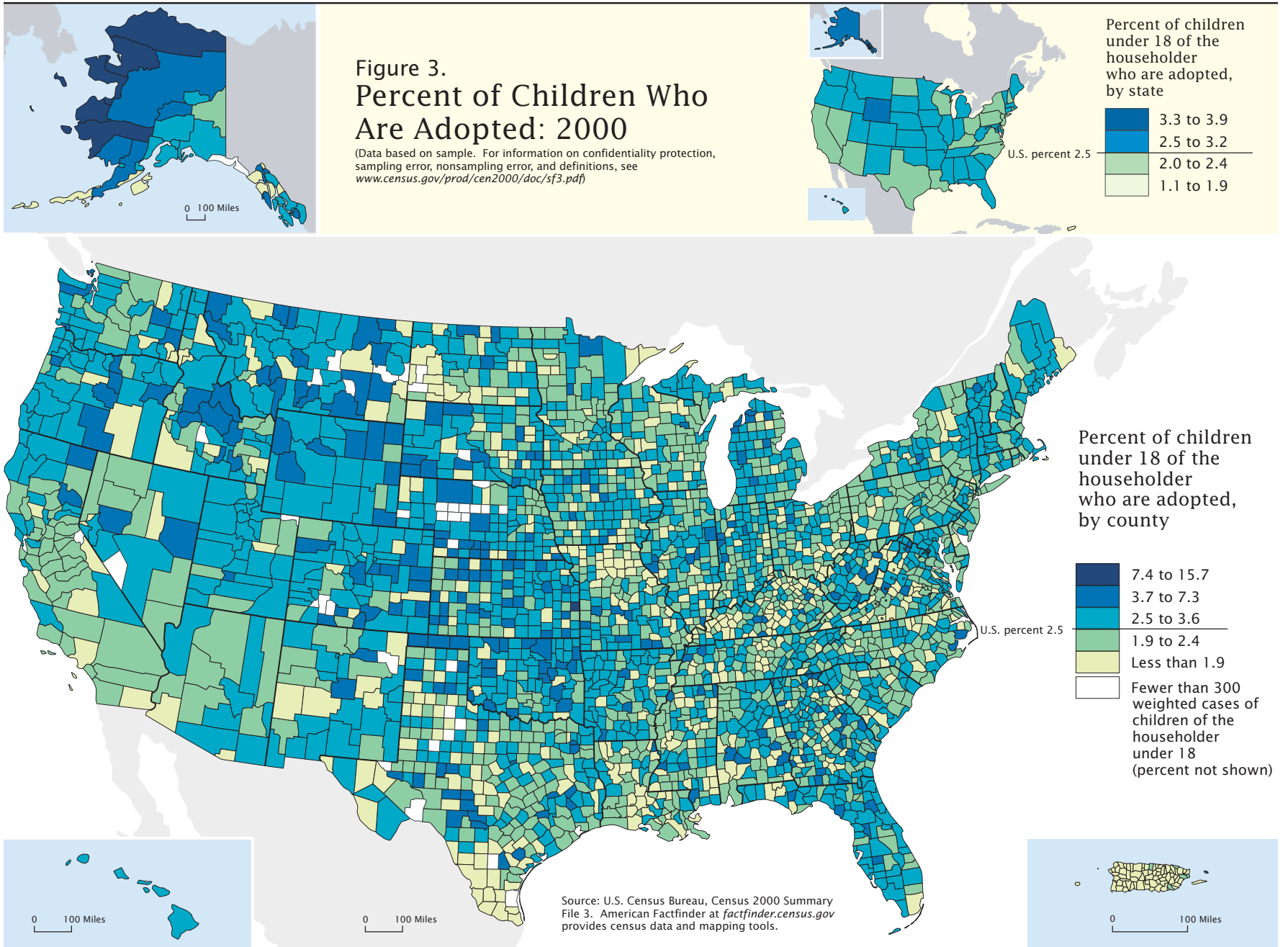
(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

Area	Total children of householder	Under 18 years							18 years and over		
		Total under 18 years	Adopted children		Stepchildren		Biological children		Adopted children	Stepchildren	Biological children
			Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent			
United States	83,714,107	64,651,959	1,586,004	2.5	3,292,301	5.1	59,773,654	92.5	472,911	1,092,280	17,496,957
Region											
Northeast	15,966,707	11,793,062	284,242	2.4	392,629	3.3	11,116,191	94.3	94,409	178,845	3,900,391
Midwest	19,304,860	15,234,402	389,096	2.6	794,509	5.2	14,050,797	92.2	103,303	240,760	3,726,395
South	29,194,157	22,576,013	548,297	2.4	1,372,665	6.1	20,655,051	91.5	170,876	425,354	6,021,914
West	19,248,383	15,048,482	364,369	2.4	732,498	4.9	13,951,615	92.7	104,323	247,321	3,848,257
State											
Alabama	1,310,310	995,282	24,944	2.5	67,226	6.8	903,112	90.7	8,488	20,185	286,355
Alaska	206,852	175,315	6,910	3.9	10,395	5.9	158,010	90.1	1,474	1,971	28,092
Arizona	1,499,746	1,197,953	28,966	2.4	65,857	5.5	1,103,130	92.1	8,412	19,565	273,816
Arkansas	763,410	604,462	15,973	2.6	51,579	8.5	536,910	88.8	4,393	12,281	142,274
California	10,561,507	8,027,573	167,190	2.1	335,760	4.2	7,524,623	93.7	54,516	137,137	2,342,281
Colorado	1,221,797	1,006,573	29,438	2.9	55,097	5.5	922,038	91.6	6,386	14,667	194,171
Connecticut	1,005,700	775,214	19,239	2.5	25,378	3.3	730,597	94.2	4,989	10,533	214,964
Delaware	224,792	172,427	3,452	2.0	8,265	4.8	160,710	93.2	1,276	3,301	47,788
District of Columbia	129,440	87,890	2,649	3.0	1,870	2.1	83,371	94.9	1,105	1,298	39,147
Florida	4,194,729	3,204,362	82,179	2.6	182,391	5.7	2,939,792	91.7	27,052	65,609	897,706
Georgia	2,452,510	1,903,475	49,194	2.6	118,721	6.2	1,735,560	91.2	14,139	37,669	497,227
Hawaii	353,159	238,287	6,941	2.9	9,664	4.1	221,682	93.0	2,917	4,152	107,803
Idaho	408,521	344,494	9,562	2.8	21,649	6.3	313,283	90.9	1,946	5,034	57,047
Illinois	3,824,955	2,886,152	73,638	2.6	121,241	4.2	2,691,273	93.2	21,819	47,778	869,206
Indiana	1,808,429	1,441,338	37,004	2.6	96,497	6.7	1,307,837	90.7	10,194	26,335	330,562
Iowa	834,338	688,589	18,569	2.7	37,030	5.4	632,990	91.9	3,983	8,872	132,894
Kansas	796,248	662,249	19,733	3.0	41,068	6.2	601,448	90.8	4,286	8,884	120,829
Kentucky	1,166,663	906,933	20,661	2.3	61,112	6.7	825,160	91.0	6,067	17,453	236,210
Louisiana	1,407,726	1,051,564	22,827	2.2	66,997	6.4	961,740	91.5	8,259	20,734	327,169
Maine	343,588	280,763	7,137	2.5	14,345	5.1	259,281	92.3	1,786	3,988	57,051
Maryland	1,576,113	1,197,553	32,269	2.7	50,985	4.3	1,114,299	93.0	9,609	22,156	346,795
Massachusetts	1,850,225	1,383,945	35,647	2.6	36,899	2.7	1,311,399	94.8	11,525	17,986	436,769
Michigan	3,046,209	2,356,202	61,232	2.6	122,038	5.2	2,172,932	92.2	17,165	41,648	631,194
Minnesota	1,478,812	1,215,739	31,378	2.6	49,522	4.1	1,134,839	93.3	7,181	13,248	242,644
Mississippi	886,323	660,190	16,300	2.5	44,414	6.7	599,476	90.8	5,802	13,743	206,588
Missouri	1,635,329	1,300,281	33,156	2.5	82,974	6.4	1,184,151	91.1	8,802	23,916	302,330
Montana	255,301	212,401	6,803	3.2	12,321	5.8	193,277	91.0	1,386	2,609	38,905
Nebraska	507,177	421,429	11,812	2.8	19,903	4.7	389,714	92.5	2,698	4,488	78,562
Nevada	561,558	452,493	10,588	2.3	29,919	6.6	411,986	91.0	3,226	8,831	97,008
New Hampshire	358,340	290,564	6,864	2.4	13,074	4.5	270,626	93.1	1,702	4,486	61,588
New Jersey	2,600,871	1,881,428	42,614	2.3	57,172	3.0	1,781,642	94.7	16,320	31,576	671,547
New Mexico	568,987	447,024	11,764	2.6	25,880	5.8	409,380	91.6	3,007	6,407	112,549
New York	5,768,499	4,153,245	100,736	2.4	120,112	2.9	3,932,397	94.7	35,577	61,241	1,518,436
North Carolina	2,229,789	1,753,973	42,911	2.4	103,062	5.9	1,608,000	91.7	11,388	29,397	435,031
North Dakota	182,579	152,943	3,647	2.4	6,619	4.3	142,677	93.3	953	1,301	27,382
Ohio	3,384,920	2,643,807	62,653	2.4	148,767	5.6	2,432,387	92.0	17,680	46,413	677,020
Oklahoma	989,854	798,929	23,518	2.9	63,632	8.0	711,779	89.1	6,463	15,372	169,090
Oregon	940,376	770,173	23,901	3.1	46,559	6.0	699,713	90.9	6,213	13,373	150,617
Pennsylvania	3,566,476	2,659,562	62,328	2.3	110,611	4.2	2,486,623	93.5	19,823	44,126	842,965
Rhode Island	304,639	229,017	5,496	2.4	8,423	3.7	215,098	93.9	1,767	3,338	70,517
South Carolina	1,158,863	881,583	22,027	2.5	52,353	5.9	807,203	91.6	7,484	15,748	254,048
South Dakota	222,873	186,772	5,691	3.0	8,886	4.8	172,195	92.2	1,155	1,774	33,172
Tennessee	1,619,371	1,244,838	30,980	2.5	87,747	7.0	1,126,111	90.5	9,791	26,280	338,462
Texas	6,590,734	5,178,912	110,275	2.1	308,074	5.9	4,760,563	91.9	34,643	90,596	1,286,583
Utah	831,039	664,965	19,430	2.9	32,176	4.8	613,359	92.2	4,646	9,977	151,451
Vermont	168,369	139,324	4,181	3.0	6,615	4.7	128,528	92.3	920	1,571	26,554
Virginia	2,000,289	1,567,983	38,289	2.4	79,118	5.0	1,450,576	92.5	11,849	26,287	394,170
Washington	1,698,284	1,392,445	38,879	2.8	79,452	5.7	1,274,114	91.5	9,491	21,955	274,393
West Virginia	493,241	365,657	9,849	2.7	25,119	6.9	330,689	90.4	3,068	7,245	117,271
Wisconsin	1,582,991	1,278,901	30,583	2.4	59,964	4.7	1,188,354	92.9	7,387	16,103	280,600
Wyoming	141,256	118,786	3,997	3.4	7,769	6.5	107,020	90.1	703	1,643	20,124
Puerto Rico	1,435,136	937,408	10,696	1.1	36,236	3.9	890,476	95.0	5,081	14,733	477,914

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

Figure 3. Percent of Children Who Are Adopted: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)



the time it takes to finalize the adoption process, as well as the decreasing number of infants in the United States in need of adoption,⁹ and the fact that children who are adopted by their stepparents would likely be at least several years old, having come from a previous marital union. For all three types of children, similar proportions were aged 18 and over, about 23 percent for adopted children and stepchildren and 25 percent for biological children.

WHERE DO ADOPTED CHILDREN LIVE?

The proportion of children under 18 who were adopted—who make up three-quarters of adopted children of all ages—hardly varied by region or state in 2000 (see Table 2).¹⁰ The percent in the Midwest (2.6 percent) was slightly higher than in the other three regions (each 2.4 percent). By state, this percentage ranged from about 2.0 in Delaware, California, Texas, and Louisiana to 3.9 percent in Alaska. As previously noted, informal adoption has been found to be common among some Alaskan Native groups,¹¹ which may

have contributed to the higher percentage in Alaska.

Although the state inset maps in Figure 3 seem to indicate that a relatively higher percentage of adopted children were found in a broad geographic band ranging diagonally across the country from Florida to Washington, it should be noted that both the levels and the range of these percentages are only a few percentage points. The most important observation about geographic patterns in the percentage of children who were adopted is that adoption is a family-building process which takes place in all states in about the same proportions. As mentioned previously, counties in Alaska with the highest percentages of children of the householder who were adopted likely reflect Alaskan Native communities in which the meaning and practice of adoption may differ from that in other communities. The fact that Census 2000 data include various types of adoption, each of which may have its own geographic pattern, may also contribute to the lack of a distinct geographic pattern when all types of adoptions are considered jointly.

WHERE DO STEPCHILDREN LIVE?

Nationally, 5 percent of children of the householder under age 18 in 2000 were stepchildren. At the regional level, percentages of children of the householder under 18 who were stepchildren varied more than the corresponding percentages for adopted children, ranging from 3.3 percent in the Northeast to 6.1 percent in the South, with both the Midwest and the West at about the national average of 5.1 percent. For children under 18, the state with the highest percentage of children of the householder who were stepchildren was

Arkansas (8.5 percent), followed by Oklahoma (8.0 percent) and Tennessee (7.0 percent). Two states with percentages just under 3 percent were Massachusetts (2.7 percent) and New York (2.9 percent). Two percent of the children of the householder under 18 in the District of Columbia were stepchildren. The differences in these state percentages are affected by the likelihood that parents remarry after divorce, whether the child lives with the father or the mother after a divorce, and the gender of the householder in remarried-couple families. Since most children continue to live with their mothers rather than their fathers, remarried-couple households with the husband as the householder will tend to create more householder-stepchild relationships than remarried couples with the wife as the householder.¹²

PROFILE OF CHILDREN OF THE HOUSEHOLDER

Demographic Patterns

In the last several years, legislation has been passed which increased financial assistance for adoptive families (e.g., Adoption Tax Credits, the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program) and removed some of the barriers to international and interracial adoptions (e.g., Child Citizenship Act of 2000, Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994). The fact that Census 2000 collected the current age of the adopted child and not the age at adoption prevents determining if the number of adopted children has increased over time. However, the presence of approximately 42,000 adopted children less than a year old living with

⁹ Anjani Chandra, Joyce Abma, Penelope Maza, and Christine Bachrach. *Adoption, Adoption Seeking, and Relinquishment for Adoption in the United States*. Vital and Health Statistics, No. 306, National Center for Health Statistics. Hyattsville, MD, 1999.

¹⁰ The Northeast region includes the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The Midwest region includes the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The South region includes the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia, a state equivalent. The West region includes the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

¹¹ Amy Craver. "Complex Inupiaq Eskimo Households and Relationships in Two Northwest Alaska Rural Communities," Alaska Native Science Commission. University of Alaska, Anchorage, 2001.

¹² The percentage of children of the householder under 18 in married-couple households with male householders, by state, was also strongly correlated ($r=.47$) with the percentage of children of the householder who were stepchildren.

Table 3.

Selected Characteristics of Householder's Children Under 18 by Type of Relationship and Sex of Child: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

Characteristic of child	Adopted children			Stepchildren			Biological children		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	1,586,004	750,528	835,476	3,292,301	1,654,766	1,637,535	59,773,654	30,740,753	29,032,901
Age									
Under 1 year	41,795	19,447	22,348	12,384	6,345	6,039	3,148,542	1,617,368	1,531,174
1 year	55,857	25,310	30,547	21,266	10,903	10,363	3,173,342	1,628,187	1,545,155
2 years	63,250	28,549	34,701	36,000	18,179	17,821	3,167,328	1,624,648	1,542,680
3 years	71,211	32,071	39,140	57,986	29,152	28,834	3,227,496	1,656,621	1,570,875
4 years	74,717	33,832	40,885	86,298	43,319	42,979	3,316,803	1,705,905	1,610,898
5 years	82,466	38,334	44,132	114,444	57,944	56,500	3,368,921	1,734,680	1,634,241
6 years	85,298	40,123	45,175	142,935	72,735	70,200	3,400,350	1,746,453	1,653,897
7 years	92,634	44,325	48,309	174,308	88,620	85,688	3,464,985	1,777,536	1,687,449
8 years	100,144	47,771	52,373	205,419	103,502	101,917	3,506,676	1,796,739	1,709,937
9 years	106,403	50,491	55,912	231,797	117,489	114,308	3,581,011	1,842,840	1,738,171
10 years	106,626	51,320	55,306	254,456	128,274	126,182	3,555,349	1,829,177	1,726,172
11 years	107,221	51,908	55,313	262,207	130,685	131,522	3,426,166	1,762,824	1,663,342
12 years	106,116	51,161	54,955	272,989	138,432	134,557	3,374,253	1,735,147	1,639,106
13 years	105,336	50,856	54,480	281,502	140,111	141,391	3,321,218	1,709,523	1,611,695
14 years	105,184	49,662	55,522	292,639	146,624	146,015	3,341,000	1,722,068	1,618,932
15 years	98,249	46,715	51,534	289,992	144,965	145,027	3,218,126	1,655,653	1,562,473
16 years	93,859	45,319	48,540	281,016	139,357	141,659	3,118,713	1,608,455	1,510,258
17 years	89,638	43,334	46,304	274,663	138,130	136,533	3,063,375	1,586,929	1,476,446
Race and Hispanic Origin									
White alone	1,017,666	489,824	527,842	2,482,249	1,248,522	1,233,727	42,358,683	21,836,836	20,521,847
Black or African American alone	254,161	122,378	131,783	402,821	200,649	202,172	7,911,317	4,021,896	3,889,421
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	25,681	12,603	13,078	39,822	19,931	19,891	597,780	305,186	292,594
Asian alone	116,909	43,285	73,624	38,905	19,203	19,702	2,069,271	1,076,538	992,733
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	4,184	2,034	2,150	4,272	2,113	2,159	88,019	45,590	42,429
Some other race alone	89,894	42,480	47,414	205,221	105,233	99,988	4,373,885	2,240,392	2,133,493
Two or more races	77,509	37,924	39,585	119,011	59,115	59,896	2,374,699	1,214,315	1,160,384
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	215,909	102,463	113,446	479,101	244,243	234,858	9,720,023	4,986,524	4,733,499
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	918,044	442,330	475,714	2,261,667	1,135,942	1,125,725	37,957,788	19,573,548	18,384,240
Nativity and English Ability									
Native	1,386,868	666,452	720,416	3,159,566	1,587,476	1,572,090	57,461,010	29,543,996	27,917,014
Foreign born	199,136	84,076	115,060	132,735	67,290	65,445	2,312,644	1,196,757	1,115,887
Foreign born aged 5 to 17 ...	147,073	65,711	81,362	127,771	64,943	62,828	2,076,420	1,074,967	1,001,453
Speaks non-English language at home ¹	45,372	21,127	24,245	107,271	54,531	52,740	1,836,079	951,318	884,761
Speaks English very well	25,138	11,194	13,944	57,474	29,029	28,445	999,482	508,057	491,425
Disability Status¹									
Aged 5 to 17	1,279,174	611,319	667,855	3,078,367	1,546,868	1,531,499	43,740,143	22,508,024	21,232,119
At least one disability	150,451	88,977	61,474	213,663	137,353	76,310	2,279,024	1,456,646	822,378
Sensory disability	18,930	9,713	9,217	34,488	18,379	16,109	404,988	222,937	182,051
Physical disability	19,595	10,782	8,813	21,814	12,611	9,203	360,976	210,348	150,628
Mental disability ²	132,700	80,694	52,006	174,842	117,942	56,900	1,768,187	1,190,175	578,012
Self-care disability	20,706	10,526	10,180	30,471	16,376	14,095	417,677	229,138	188,539
Multiple disabilities ³	27,498	15,334	12,164	33,863	19,855	14,008	463,179	277,620	185,559
In Poverty	187,018	87,998	99,020	342,435	174,111	168,324	9,578,757	4,887,268	4,691,489

¹These questions were asked only of people aged 5 and over.

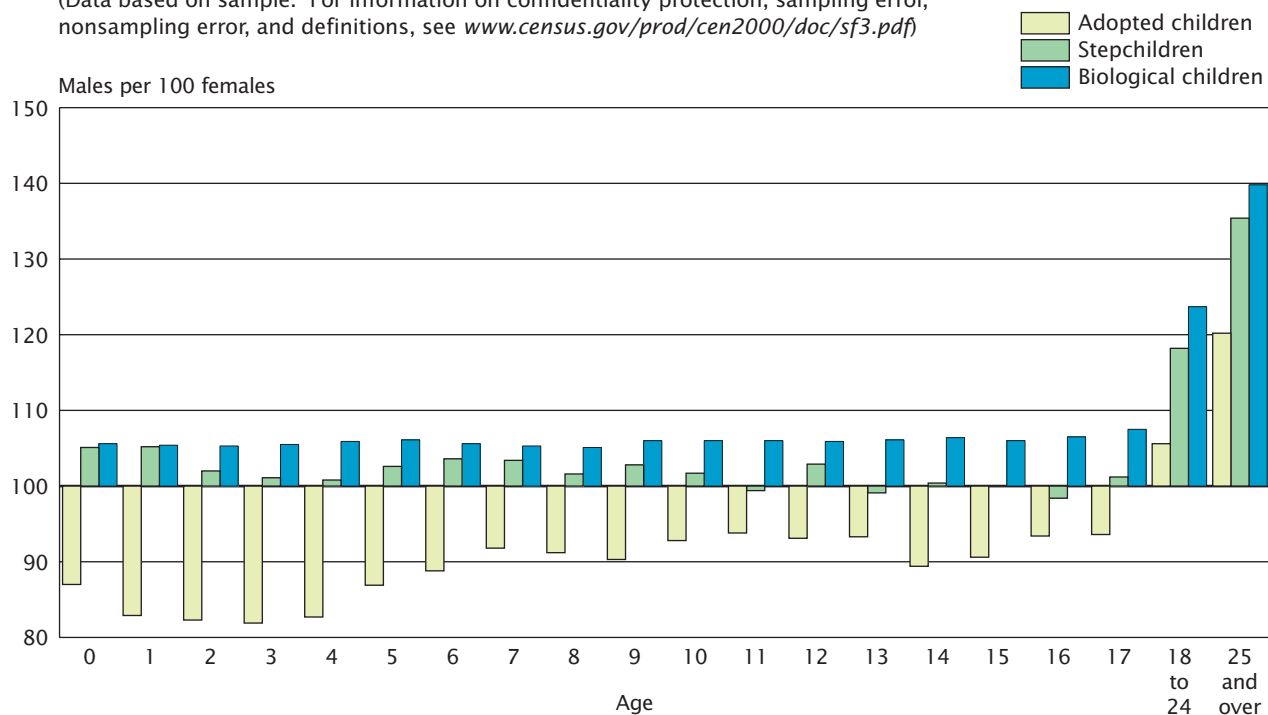
²The question asks if the person has difficulty learning, remembering, or concentrating.

³This includes children with any combination of two or more of the disabilities listed above.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

Figure 4.
Sex Ratio for Children of the Householder by Age of Child: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

householders means, that at least this number of infants were adopted in the 1-year period prior to the census (see Table 3).

The number of stepchildren was larger at each single year of age until age 14. In comparison, the relative lack of variation in the number of biological children at each age reflects roughly equal numbers of annual births during the preceding two decades. The relative increases by age shown for adopted children and stepchildren reflect the length of the adoption process for adopted children and the intervals between parental marriage, childbearing, divorce, and remarriage for stepchildren.

In addition to different age patterns, the sex ratio (i.e., the number of males per 100 females) shows

variations among adopted, biological, and stepchildren. For children under 18, the sex ratio was highest for biological children (106), followed by stepchildren (101) and adopted children (90). The sex ratio for biological children reflects the fact that there are more male births than female births, and that, at older ages, girls leave home earlier than boys, reflecting in part the earlier average age at first marriage for women than for men.

More girls than boys are adopted, for several reasons. First, women in general express a preference for adopting girls,¹³ and single women more frequently have adopted girls

¹³ Anjani Chandra, Joyce Abma, Penelope Maza, and Christine Bachrach. *Adoption, Adoption Seeking, and Relinquishment for Adoption in the United States*. Vital and Health Statistics, No. 306, National Center for Health Statistics. Hyattsville, MD, 1999.

than boys.¹⁴ Also, a majority of the children available for adoption from other countries that are leading sources for adopted children are girls.¹⁵

Figure 4 displays the sex ratio of biological, adopted, and stepchildren of the householder by age. Age is shown in single years

¹⁴ Victor Groze. "Adoption and single parents: a review." *Child Welfare*, 1991. Vol. 70, No. 3, pp. 321-332.

¹⁵ Families With Children from China (FWCC) states that about 95 percent of the children in China waiting for adoption are girls. Also, see Sten Johansson and Ola Nygren. "The Missing Girls of China: A New Demographic Account" *Population and Development Review*. 1991, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 35-51, which discusses the sex ratio of adopted children within China. Data from Census 2000 show that 93 percent of the adopted children who were born in China were girls. In Census 2000 data, 57 percent of the adopted children born in Korea are girls. The sex ratio for the adopted children who were born in India is also relatively low, since 65 percent of these children were girls.

up to age 17, and then in two age groups: 18 to 24 years and 25 and over. The sex ratio, the number of males per 100 females, has a value of 100 when there are equal numbers of boys and girls; a value above 100 indicates there are more boys than girls and a value below 100 indicates more girls than boys. Figure 4 shows that, for all ages under 18, there were more adopted girls than boys at each year of age, particularly for children under 6 years, for whom the sex ratio was 90 or less. For adopted children aged 18 and over, the ratio was greater than 100, indicating that adopted children who continued to live in their parents' households were more likely to be boys than girls, paralleling the case for biological and stepchildren. The sex ratio for biological children was fairly constant for children under 18 years, and then jumped dramatically, showing that boys were more likely to live in their parents' households as adults.

The sex ratio for stepchildren under 18 hovered relatively close to 100, in contrast with that for biological and adopted children.

Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity Characteristics

Census 2000 allowed respondents to choose more than one race. With the exception of the Two or more races group, all race groups discussed in this report refer to people who indicated *only one* racial identity among the six major categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Some other race.¹⁶ The use of the single-race population in this report does not

¹⁶ For further information on each of the six major race groups and the Two or more races population, see reports from the Census 2000 Brief series (C2KBR/01), available on the Census 2000 Web site at www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs.html.

imply that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. The Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches.¹⁷

In 2000, White (and no other race), not Hispanic children made up the majority of all categories of children of householders under 18: about 58 percent of adopted children, 64 percent of biological children, and 69 percent of stepchildren (see Table 4). A higher percentage of adopted children under 18 were Black or African American (16 percent) than the percentage of biological children (13 percent) and the percentage of stepchildren (12 percent).¹⁸ This higher percentage may be due in part to the fact that the percentage of children in the child welfare system who are Black is higher than the percentage of children in the overall population who are Black,¹⁹ and may also reflect a higher number of informal adoptions in African American communities. Although the percentage of children under 18 who were American Indian and Alaska Native is small, a higher percentage of adopted children were American Indian and Alaska Native (1.6 percent) than the percentage of biological (1.0 percent) or stepchildren (1.2 percent) who are American

¹⁷ This report draws heavily on Summary File 3, a Census 2000 product that can be accessed through American FactFinder, available from the Census Bureau's Web site, www.census.gov. Information on people who reported more than one race, such as "White **and** American Indian and Alaska Native" or "Asian **and** Black or African American" can be found in Summary File 4, also available through American FactFinder. About 2.6 percent of people reported more than one race.

¹⁸ Hereafter, this report uses the term Black to refer to people who are Black or African American, the term Pacific Islander to refer to people who are Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and the term Hispanic to refer to people who are Hispanic or Latino.

¹⁹ National Adoption Center Web site at www.adoptuskids.org. The National Adoption Center is a service of the Children's Bureau, of the Administration for Children and Families, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Indian and Alaska Native, which may be related to informal adoptions in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

The percentage of adopted children under 18 who were Asian (7.4 percent) is higher than the percentage of biological (3.5 percent) and stepchildren (1.2 percent) who were Asian. This is due largely to the fact that nearly half (49 percent) of all foreign-born adopted children were born in Asian countries. A slightly lower percentage of adopted children than stepchildren or biological children under 18 were Hispanic (14 percent compared with 15 percent and 16 percent, respectively).²⁰

Tables 3 and 4 also show the number and percentage of children of the householder who were foreign born and the number who spoke English "very well" among those 5 to 17 years who spoke a language other than English at home. About 4 percent of children under 18 who were stepchildren or biological children in 2000 were foreign born.²¹ The corresponding percentage was considerably higher for adopted children—11 percent for boys and 14 percent for girls. The higher percentage for girls was heavily influenced by the number of foreign-born adopted children who were Asian, because the

²⁰ Because Hispanics may be of any race, data in this report for Hispanics overlap with data for racial groups. Based on Census 2000 sample data, the proportion Hispanic was 8.0 percent for the White alone population, 2.0 percent for the Black alone population, 14.6 percent for the American Indian and Alaska Native alone population, 1.0 percent for the Asian alone population, 9.5 percent for the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone population, 97.1 percent for the Some other race alone population, and 31.1 percent for the Two or more races population.

²¹ These percentages, 4.0 percent for stepchildren and 3.9 percent for biological children, differ statistically but not substantively.

Table 4.

Percent Distribution of Selected Characteristics of Householder's Children Under 18 by Type of Relationship and Sex of Child: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

Characteristic of child	Adopted children			Stepchildren			Biological children		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Age									
Under 1 year	2.6	2.6	2.7	0.4	0.4	0.4	5.3	5.3	5.3
1 year	3.5	3.4	3.7	0.6	0.7	0.6	5.3	5.3	5.3
2 years	4.0	3.8	4.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	5.3	5.3	5.3
3 years	4.5	4.3	4.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	5.4	5.4	5.4
4 years	4.7	4.5	4.9	2.6	2.6	2.6	5.5	5.5	5.5
5 years	5.2	5.1	5.3	3.5	3.5	3.5	5.6	5.6	5.6
6 years	5.4	5.3	5.4	4.3	4.4	4.3	5.7	5.7	5.7
7 years	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.8	5.8	5.8
8 years	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.2	6.3	6.2	5.9	5.8	5.9
9 years	6.7	6.7	6.7	7.0	7.1	7.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
10 years	6.7	6.8	6.6	7.7	7.8	7.7	5.9	6.0	5.9
11 years	6.8	6.9	6.6	8.0	7.9	8.0	5.7	5.7	5.7
12 years	6.7	6.8	6.6	8.3	8.4	8.2	5.6	5.6	5.6
13 years	6.6	6.8	6.5	8.6	8.5	8.6	5.6	5.6	5.6
14 years	6.6	6.6	6.6	8.9	8.9	8.9	5.6	5.6	5.6
15 years	6.2	6.2	6.2	8.8	8.8	8.9	5.4	5.4	5.4
16 years	5.9	6.0	5.8	8.5	8.4	8.7	5.2	5.2	5.2
17 years	5.7	5.8	5.5	8.3	8.3	8.3	5.1	5.2	5.1
Race and Hispanic Origin									
White alone	64.2	65.3	63.2	75.4	75.5	75.3	70.9	71.0	70.7
Black or African American alone	16.0	16.3	15.8	12.2	12.1	12.3	13.2	13.1	13.4
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.0
Asian alone	7.4	5.8	8.8	1.2	1.2	1.2	3.5	3.5	3.4
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Some other race alone	5.7	5.7	5.7	6.2	6.4	6.1	7.3	7.3	7.3
Two or more races	4.9	5.1	4.7	3.6	3.6	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.0
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	13.6	13.7	13.6	14.6	14.8	14.3	16.3	16.2	16.3
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	57.9	58.9	56.9	68.7	68.6	68.7	63.5	63.7	63.3
Nativity and English Ability									
Native	87.4	88.8	86.2	96.0	95.9	96.0	96.1	96.1	96.2
Foreign born	12.6	11.2	13.8	4.0	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.8
Foreign born aged 5 to 17 ...	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Speaks non-English language at home ¹	30.8	32.2	29.8	84.0	84.0	83.9	88.4	88.5	88.3
Speaks English very well	17.1	17.0	17.1	45.0	44.7	45.3	48.1	47.3	49.1
Disability Status¹									
Aged 5 to 17	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
At least one disability	11.8	14.6	9.2	6.9	8.9	5.0	5.2	6.5	3.9
Sensory disability	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.1	1.2	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.9
Physical disability	1.5	1.8	1.3	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.7
Mental disability ²	10.4	13.2	7.8	5.7	7.6	3.7	4.0	5.3	2.7
Self-care disability	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9
Multiple disabilities ³	2.1	2.5	1.8	1.1	1.3	0.9	1.1	1.2	0.9
In Poverty	11.8	11.7	11.9	10.4	10.5	10.3	16.0	15.9	16.2

¹These questions were asked only of people aged 5 and over.

²The question asks if the person has difficulty learning, remembering, or concentrating.

³This includes children with any combination of two or more of the disabilities listed above.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

majority of adopted Asian children were girls.

While most foreign-born biological and stepchildren under age 18 (88 percent and 84 percent, respectively) spoke a language other than English at home, this was not the case for foreign-born adopted children. Thirty percent of foreign-born adopted girls and 32 percent of foreign-born adopted boys under 18 spoke a language other than English at home. Many of the foreign-born adopted children were likely adopted at a young age, before they could speak any language fluently, and since their parents often speak only English, they are more likely to do so as well. Of those who spoke a language other than English, the proportion who spoke English “very well” was over half for all children, at about 54 percent.

Disability and Poverty Status of Children

The Census 2000 long form provided basic information about physical and mental limitations that children may have. For each person aged 5 and over, information was collected on hearing or vision difficulties (sensory disabilities); conditions which limited basic activities (physical disabilities); difficulty in learning, remembering, or concentrating (mental disabilities); and difficulty in getting dressed, bathing, or getting around inside the house (self-care disabilities). People answered these questions as they perceived the capabilities of the individual, regardless of whether the condition fit any medical or legal definitions of a disability.

Table 4 indicates that a higher proportion of adopted children under 18 than of biological and stepchildren under 18 had at least

one disability.²² This was true for both boys (15 percent for adopted, compared with 9 percent for stepchildren and 7 percent for biological children) and girls (9 percent for adopted, compared with 5 percent of stepchildren and 4 percent for biological children). The most commonly reported disability was difficulty learning, remembering, or concentrating, which is categorized in the table under the term “mental disability.” Parents who reported this difficulty for their children were likely reporting conditions such as learning disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, as well as other conditions. This category may also include children who suffer the effects of maternal drug abuse, fetal alcohol syndrome, or any medical condition that affects the child’s mental capabilities.

About 3 percent of biological girls under 18 were reported to have difficulty learning, remembering, or concentrating, as were about 5 percent of biological boys under 18. The percentages for stepchildren were higher, at 4 percent for girls and about 8 percent for boys. Adopted children had the highest

²² The word “disability” as used in this report refers to people who answered “yes” to Census 2000 long form question 16, part a or b, or question 17, part a or b. Question 16 reads: “Does this person have any of the following long-lasting conditions: a. Blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment? b. A condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting or carrying?”

The first two parts of Question 17 read: “Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting 6 months or more, does this person have any difficulty in doing any of the following activities: a. Learning, remembering, or concentrating? b. Dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home? Since most of the people identified as children of the householder were under 18, the answers to question 17, parts c and d, were not considered for this report since they asked about difficulty going outside the home alone, and difficulty working, and were not asked of people below age 16.

percentages, at 8 percent for girls and 13 percent for boys under 18.

The percentage of children under 18 who had multiple disabilities (more than one of the categories listed) ranged only from 0.9 percent for biological and stepdaughters to 2.5 percent for adopted boys. Although the categories available for analysis do not have exact medical definitions, it appears that adoptive families face significant challenges in dealing with the needs of their children.

While more adopted children under 18 had disabilities, they tended to live in families that were better off economically than their biological counterparts. Table 4 shows that about 12 percent of adopted children of the householder were in poverty, compared with 16 percent for biological children. Stepchildren under 18 recorded the lowest proportion living in poverty (10 percent).

Foreign-Born Adopted Children

Some prospective adoptive parents may decide to adopt a foreign-born child if adopting a child in the United States may take longer. Adopting from a foreign country with a well-organized program often assures parents they will receive a child within a fairly dependable timeline, generally about a year. For this reason and others, the adoption of foreign-born children has increased. The number of immigrant visas issued to orphans coming to the United States for adoption increased from about 7,000 in 1990 to nearly 18,000 in 2000.²³

²³ Totals from U.S. State Department Web site at: www.travel.state.gov/orphan_numbers.html. For more information about the increase in international adoptions, see: Peter Selman. “Intercountry adoption in the new millennium; the ‘quiet migration’ revisited” *Population Research and Policy Review*, 2002, Vol. 21, pp. 205-225.

Table 5.
Adopted Children of the Householder by Place of Birth and Age: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

Nativity and place of birth	Total adopted children of householder	Under 18 years					18 years and over		
		Total	Under 6	6 to 11	12 to 14	15 to 17	Total	18 to 24	25 and over
Total	2,058,915	1,586,004	389,296	598,326	316,636	281,746	472,911	273,957	198,954
Native	1,801,123	1,386,868	326,134	536,531	278,795	245,408	414,255	238,670	175,585
Foreign born ¹	257,792	199,136	63,162	61,795	37,841	36,338	58,656	35,287	23,369
Europe ²	42,370	36,800	16,955	14,144	3,175	2,526	5,570	2,449	3,121
Russia	20,208	19,631	11,825	6,271	1,002	533	577	459	118
Romania	6,329	6,183	2,113	3,426	468	176	146	111	35
Ukraine	2,764	2,328	904	921	258	245	436	280	156
Asia ²	122,899	98,368	34,332	23,478	20,694	19,864	24,531	15,316	9,215
China	22,410	21,053	17,681	2,425	514	433	1,357	644	713
India	9,579	7,793	1,712	2,437	2,070	1,574	1,786	1,294	492
Korea	56,825	47,555	9,159	12,132	13,474	12,790	9,270	7,066	2,204
Philippines	9,828	6,286	659	2,053	1,628	1,946	3,542	2,125	1,417
Vietnam	7,377	4,291	2,183	855	570	683	3,086	1,041	2,045
Africa	4,307	3,111	549	1,109	820	633	1,196	741	455
Latin America ²	83,940	58,166	10,681	22,152	12,672	12,661	25,774	16,186	9,588
Central America ²	47,659	32,476	6,868	10,774	7,018	7,816	15,183	9,702	5,481
Guatemala	8,428	7,357	3,644	2,229	712	772	1,071	741	330
Mexico	28,090	18,201	2,655	6,333	4,454	4,759	9,889	5,972	3,917
El Salvador	4,475	2,254	125	575	581	973	2,221	1,702	519
South America ²	25,981	20,354	3,110	9,453	4,335	3,456	5,627	4,040	1,587
Colombia	9,656	7,054	1,235	2,685	1,588	1,546	2,602	2,073	529
Northern America	2,797	1,576	113	630	351	482	1,221	373	848

¹Foreign born includes 1,479 children born in Oceania and 0 children "born at sea," which are not shown separately.

²Includes areas not shown separately.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

Because of the large sample size of Census 2000, a detailed examination of the place of birth of foreign-born adopted children can be shown in Table 5. The number of children from selected countries or regions is shown by the age of the child, which may suggest change over time in the most important birth countries.

In 2000, 13 percent of adopted children of householders of all ages were foreign born. Nearly half (48 percent) of the foreign-born adopted children were born in Asia, about one-third (33 percent) in Latin America, and about one-sixth (16 percent) in Europe. An examination of the age differences in the proportion of foreign-born adopted children who were born in Europe

suggests that their numbers may have increased in recent years. While about 10 percent of all foreign-born adopted children aged 18 and over were born in Europe, the proportion was 23 percent for children aged 6 to 11 and 27 percent for those under 6. A large component of all European-born adopted children under 6 was from Russia and Romania. Eighty-two percent of European-born adopted children under 6 in 2000 were from these two countries, compared with 69 percent of their counterparts aged 6 to 11, and only 13 percent for those 18 and over. Children under 12 in 2000 would have been born in 1989 or later, so they would have been very young when the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, or were born in the subsequent years.

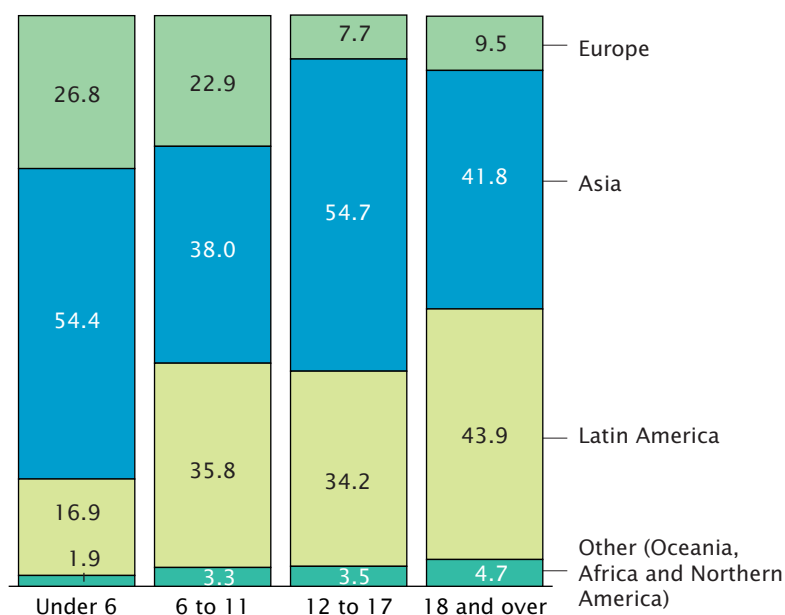
The resulting economic and social changes left large numbers of children available for adoption.²⁴

Korea was the largest single-country source of foreign-born adopted children, providing about 57,000 children or a little over one-fifth (22 percent) of all foreign-born adopted children. This proportion is significantly lower for children under 6 (15 percent) than for children 6 to 11 (20 percent) or children 12 to 17 (35 percent). The percentage of foreign-born adopted children who were born in China was less than 3 percent of all foreign-born adopted children

²⁴ Peter Selman. "Intercountry adoption in the new millennium; the 'quiet migration' revisited" *Population Research and Policy Review*, 2002, Vol. 21, pp 205-225.

Figure 5.
Percent Distribution of Foreign-Born Adopted Children of the Householder by Age of Child and Place of Birth: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulations.

aged 6 and over but 28 percent of those under 6. One consequence of enforcement of the one-child population policy in China is the abandonment of girls because of the cultural preference for sons.²⁵ Since the early 1990s, when China began to allow large numbers of these girls to be adopted by foreigners, an increasing number have been adopted by U.S. citizens. The U.S. State Department recorded only 61 immigrant visas issued to orphans coming to the United States from China in 1991, but 5,053 in 2000.²⁶

²⁵ Kay Johnson, Huang Banghan, and Wang Liyao. "Infant Abandonment and Adoption in China" *Population and Development Review*, 1998, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 469-510.

²⁶ Totals from U.S. State Department web site at: www.travel.state.gov/orphan_numbers.html. Also see the Families With Children from China web site at fwcc.org/statistics.html.

After Asia, Latin America was the second largest region of origin for foreign-born adopted children of the householder, numbering about 84,000 children or about one-third of all foreign-born adopted children. The largest source country in this region was Mexico, which accounted for one-third of all adopted children from Latin America. Unlike the children born in China, the Mexican children were evidently not predominantly orphans being adopted by U.S. citizens. The State Department recorded only between 50 and 200 immigrant visas issued to Mexican children per year during the 1990s.²⁷ Thus, many of these

²⁷ Totals from U.S. State Department Web site at: www.travel.state.gov/orphan_numbers.html.

children may have been adopted informally by relatives.²⁸ Intermarriage between non-Hispanic Whites and Hispanics is relatively common; so the adoption of stepchildren in these marriages may also help account for the large number of foreign-born adopted children born in Mexico.²⁹ About 37 percent of the foreign-born adopted children born in South America were born in Colombia, which has experienced social turmoil and war for decades.

PROFILE OF THE HOUSEHOLDERS OF ADOPTED CHILDREN AND STEPCHILDREN

Race and Hispanic Origin of the Householder

While the previous sections of this report have examined the characteristics of adopted and stepchildren, the following sections present estimates of the numbers of such children by the characteristics of the householder and the type of household in which the children lived. Table 6 shows that there was less variation by type of relationship in the race and Hispanic origin of the householder than there was in the race and origin of the children themselves. The percentage of children under 18 who lived with a non-Hispanic White householder was substantively the same for both adopted (71 percent) and stepchildren (72 percent), and somewhat lower for biological children (65 percent). The

²⁸ Hamm describes informal adoption as perhaps more common among Hispanics than formal adoption, stating that children may be raised by relatives. Maria Suarez Hamm. "Latino Adoption Issues," *Adoption Factbook III*. National Council for Adoption: Washington, DC. 1999, pp. 257-260.

²⁹ See Census 2000, PHC-T-19, *Hispanic Origin and Race of Coupled Households: 2000* and Tavia Simmons and Martin O'Connell. *Married-Couple and Unmarried-Partner Households: 2000*. Census 2000 Special Reports, CENSR-5. U.S. Census Bureau: Washington, DC, 2003.

Table 6.
Children of the Householder by Type of Relationship, Age, and Selected Characteristics of the Householder: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

Characteristic of householder	Adopted children			Stepchildren			Biological children		
	Under 18 years		18 years and over	Under 18 years		18 years and over	Under 18 years		18 years and over
	Number	Per-cent	Number	Percent	Per-cent	Number	Number	Per-cent	Number
Total	1,586,004	100.0	472,911	3,292,301	100.0	1,092,280	59,773,654	100.0	17,496,957
Race and Hispanic Origin of Householder									
White alone.....	1,198,959	75.6	352,816	2,536,082	77.0	822,080	43,017,780	72.0	11,973,603
Black or African American alone.....	231,459	14.6	71,945	415,460	12.6	157,226	7,980,985	13.4	2,918,756
American Indian and Alaska Native alone ..	18,595	1.2	4,910	39,721	1.2	10,615	608,129	1.0	179,191
Asian alone.....	36,153	2.3	14,936	33,206	1.0	17,001	2,181,674	3.6	832,388
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	2,666	0.2	887	4,077	0.1	1,566	98,016	0.2	29,230
Some other race alone.....	66,894	4.2	18,351	193,040	5.9	61,073	4,429,909	7.4	1,154,466
Two or more races	31,278	2.0	9,066	70,715	2.1	22,719	1,457,161	2.4	409,323
Hispanic or Latino (of any race).....	149,786	9.4	45,365	408,548	12.4	137,523	9,255,817	15.5	2,574,084
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino.....	1,129,821	71.2	329,914	2,355,608	71.5	757,754	38,927,446	65.1	10,750,574
Child and Householder Race/Origin Difference									
Child is different race than householder ¹	271,454	17.1	49,705	356,441	10.8	105,957	4,010,538	6.7	893,039
Child is different Hispanic origin than householder ²	105,097	6.6	20,227	217,987	6.6	59,496	1,384,636	2.3	241,516
Living Arrangement of the Householder									
Married couple households	1,237,784	78.0	308,522	2,904,701	88.2	980,191	44,121,622	73.8	10,497,970
Male householder—no spouse present.....	78,698	5.0	43,156	314,828	9.6	79,947	3,066,778	5.1	1,248,035
With an unmarried partner.....	28,641	1.8	4,172	264,404	8.0	36,716	1,335,277	2.2	128,384
No unmarried partner present.....	50,057	3.2	38,984	50,424	1.5	43,231	1,731,501	2.9	1,119,651
Married—spouse absent	5,393	0.3	4,208	10,227	0.3	7,154	189,624	0.3	130,739
Divorced or widowed	27,798	1.8	28,198	19,725	0.6	27,285	1,027,436	1.7	844,662
Separated	6,337	0.4	2,596	6,167	0.2	4,903	254,107	0.4	99,307
Never married	10,529	0.7	3,982	14,305	0.4	3,889	260,334	0.4	44,943
Female householder—no spouse present ..	269,522	17.0	121,233	72,772	2.2	32,142	12,585,254	21.1	5,750,952
With an unmarried partner.....	29,052	1.8	4,379	42,487	1.3	8,052	1,703,394	2.8	241,489
No unmarried partner present.....	240,470	15.2	116,854	30,285	0.9	24,090	10,881,860	18.2	5,509,463
Married—spouse absent	11,547	0.7	4,285	6,112	0.2	2,510	614,014	1.0	215,233
Divorced or widowed	126,564	8.0	93,039	11,000	0.3	16,529	4,786,081	8.0	4,224,528
Separated	33,637	2.1	9,053	5,249	0.2	2,688	1,900,471	3.2	567,930
Never married	68,722	4.3	10,477	7,924	0.2	2,363	3,581,294	6.0	501,772
Average age of householder (in years)	43.1	(X)	57.0	37.7	(X)	48.6	38.0	(X)	54.8
Average Age Difference (in years)									
Between householder and child	33.7	(X)	29.5	28.1	(X)	24.8	26.4	(X)	30.8
Between spouse ³ of householder and child	31.7	(X)	28.4	26.3	(X)	23.1	24.0	(X)	28.2
Between partner ⁴ of householder and child ..	27.8	(X)	24.9	23.0	(X)	21.3	23.0	(X)	24.0

X Not applicable.

¹Child and householder do not report the same group, where race groups are: White alone, Black alone, American Indian and Alaska Native alone, Asian alone, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander alone, Some Other Race alone, or either the child or householder reports multiple race groups.

²Child is Hispanic and householder is not Hispanic, or vice versa.

³For households containing a spouse of householder.

⁴For households containing an unmarried partner of the householder.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

range in the percentages of children under 18 who lived with a Black householder was relatively small: 13 percent of biological and stepchildren, compared with 15 percent of adopted children. A higher percentage of biological children (4 percent) than adopted children (2 percent) and stepchildren (1 percent) lived with an Asian householder. This difference may be due in part to the fact that Asians are less likely to divorce and so would not be as likely to remarry and have stepchildren.³⁰

Table 6 also shows the percentage of children under 18 who differed in race or Hispanic origin from the householder. Adopted children had the highest percentages who were of different races from the householder: 17 percent for those under 18, and 11 percent for those 18 and over. About 11 percent of stepchildren under 18, and 10 percent of those 18 and over were of different races than the householder, compared with 7 percent and 5 percent of biological children under 18 years and 18 and over, respectively.³¹

About the same percentage of adopted and stepchildren under 18 years were Hispanic while the householder was not, or vice versa

(7 percent). The corresponding percentage for biological children was lower, 2 percent. Second and later marriages are more likely to involve spouses of different race and Hispanic origin;³² so it is not surprising that a higher percentage of stepchildren than biological children were of a different race or Hispanic origin than their householder parent.

Living Arrangements and Age of the Householder

Since Census 2000 relationship data were collected in reference to the householder, the living arrangements experienced by children can be analyzed by the presence or absence of a spouse or unmarried partner of the householder. Table 6 shows that the percentage of adopted children under 18 who lived with two married parents (78 percent) was higher than the percentage of biological children (74 percent) but lower than the percentage of stepchildren (88 percent). This contrast can be predicted because most stepchildren become stepchildren when one of their biological parents remarries.

Although Census 2000 data cannot tell us if single-parent³³ adoptions are increasing, data in Table 6 present the current living arrangements of single parents and whether they were formerly married, never married, or were living with an unmarried partner when the census was taken. The marital status and living arrangements of parents at the time of the census may have been different than when they adopted their

children. About 5 percent of adopted and biological children under 18 lived with a male householder who had no spouse present.³⁴ For stepchildren, this percentage was 10 percent. The stepfathers of about 84 percent of stepchildren who lived with single fathers were living with an unmarried partner. These children may be the biological children of the partners of these men. Web sites for stepfamilies frequently refer to the children of an adult's partner as his or her stepchildren.³⁵

The percentage of children under 18 who lived with a female householder who had no spouse present varied widely, from 2 percent for stepchildren, to 17 percent for adopted children, to 21 percent for biological children. Except for the mothers of stepchildren, proportionally few of these women had an unmarried partner. Just over half of the adopted children under 18 with an unmarried mother who had no partner present had a divorced or widowed mother. Five percent of the adopted children and 6 percent of the biological children under 18 lived with a never-married mother or father who was not living with a partner.

The lower section of Table 6 shows the average age of the householder; and the age gap between the child and the householder, the spouse, or the partner of the householder. For

³⁰ Rose M. Kreider and Jason M. Fields. *Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: Fall 1996*. Current Population Reports, P70-80. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2002.

³¹ Biological children may differ in race from the householder under this classification method if their parents are of two different races, and the child is reported as being one race. Also, if the child has one parent who is White and one parent who is Black, the child may be reported as White and Black, in which case they would be included in the "Two or more races" category, and thus differ from the householder. Additionally, all those in the "Two or more races" category are automatically included in the "child is different race than householder" category.

³² Belinda M. Tucker and Claudia Mitchell-Kernan. "New Trends in Black American Interracial Marriage: The Social Structural Context," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 1990, Vol. 52, pp. 209-218.

³³ Single as used here includes people who are never married, separated, divorced and widowed.

³⁴ The difference between these two numbers is statistically significant, but the numbers are substantively the same.

³⁵ It should be noted that less than one percent of stepchildren are living with householders who have never been married. This could have resulted from imputations of marital status at later stages in the editing process (marital status was not on the 100-percent form when relationship data were edited) or as mentioned, lack of a proper way of describing a parent-child relationship between householder and child of a current or former unmarried partner.

Table 7.

Children of the Householder by Type of Relationship and Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Householder: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

Characteristic of householder	Adopted children			Stepchildren			Biological children		
	Under 18 years		18 years and over	Under 18 years		18 years and over	Under 18 years		18 years and over
	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Percent	Number
Total	1,586,004	100.0	472,911	3,292,301	100.0	1,092,280	59,773,654	100.0	17,496,957
Household Income in 1999									
\$0 or less	14,829	0.9	1,870	14,825	0.5	2,597	662,300	1.1	90,047
\$1- \$9,999	71,340	4.5	12,582	77,572	2.4	13,348	3,624,677	6.1	569,049
\$10,000-\$14,999	51,469	3.2	12,698	87,492	2.7	14,750	2,768,130	4.6	551,735
\$15,000-\$24,999	128,769	8.1	35,311	290,371	8.8	50,879	6,366,324	10.7	1,430,426
\$25,000-\$34,999	155,711	9.8	42,926	417,565	12.7	79,037	6,935,222	11.6	1,717,875
\$35,000-\$49,999	253,548	16.0	70,369	690,279	21.0	157,027	10,062,178	16.8	2,747,803
\$50,000-\$74,999	376,080	23.7	111,649	904,601	27.5	299,749	13,412,763	22.4	4,107,784
\$75,000-\$99,999	224,247	14.1	79,119	426,277	12.9	219,416	7,254,553	12.1	2,796,532
\$100,000-\$149,999	183,138	11.5	69,239	261,558	7.9	180,917	5,350,650	9.0	2,378,937
\$150,000-\$199,999	56,281	3.5	19,408	62,852	1.9	43,691	1,537,731	2.6	624,813
\$200,000 or more	70,592	4.5	17,740	58,909	1.8	30,869	1,799,126	3.0	481,956
Median household income ¹	56,138	(X)	62,300	50,900	(X)	68,182	48,200	(X)	58,000
Educational Attainment of the Householder									
Less than high school	226,646	14.3	107,058	568,065	17.3	225,382	10,741,542	18.0	4,805,826
High school graduate	359,142	22.6	120,705	1,132,925	34.4	346,954	15,808,215	26.4	5,071,387
Some college	470,571	29.7	125,637	1,074,775	32.6	326,678	17,769,199	29.7	4,470,681
Bachelor's degree	288,435	18.2	65,255	354,485	10.8	124,596	9,630,917	16.1	1,891,050
Graduate or professional school degree	241,210	15.2	54,256	162,051	4.9	68,670	5,823,781	9.7	1,258,013
Labor Force Participation of the Householder									
In labor force	1,337,279	84.3	305,636	2,955,585	89.8	883,913	51,366,467	85.9	11,716,118
Employed	1,296,434	81.7	296,554	2,852,656	86.6	858,970	49,260,767	82.4	11,294,769
Unemployed	40,845	2.6	9,082	102,929	3.1	24,943	2,105,700	3.5	421,349
Not in labor force	248,725	15.7	167,275	336,716	10.2	208,367	8,407,187	14.1	5,780,839
Tenure									
Owns home	1,233,692	77.8	392,679	2,200,742	66.8	869,716	39,950,491	66.8	13,521,745
Rents home ²	352,312	22.2	80,232	1,091,559	33.2	222,564	19,823,163	33.2	3,975,212

X Not applicable.

¹Median calculated from a continuous distribution using SAS version 8 statistical software.

²Includes those who occupy without cash payment.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

children under 18, the householders of biological and stepchildren were, on average, 38 years old, while householders of adopted children were about 5 years older (43 years). This age difference is not surprising since the adoption process often takes time, and people who adopted in order to build their families tend to be older, especially if they adopted children after trying to have biological children. Adoptive

parents who are also the biological grandparents of the child would tend to be older as well. Previous research has found that adoptive mothers also tend to be older.³⁶

³⁶ See Anjani Chandra, Joyce Abma, Penelope Maza, and Christine Bachrach. *Adoption, Adoption Seeking, and Relinquishment for Adoption in the United States*. Vital and Health Statistics, No. 306. National Center for Health Statistics. Hyattsville, MD, 1999; and Jeanne Moorman and Donald

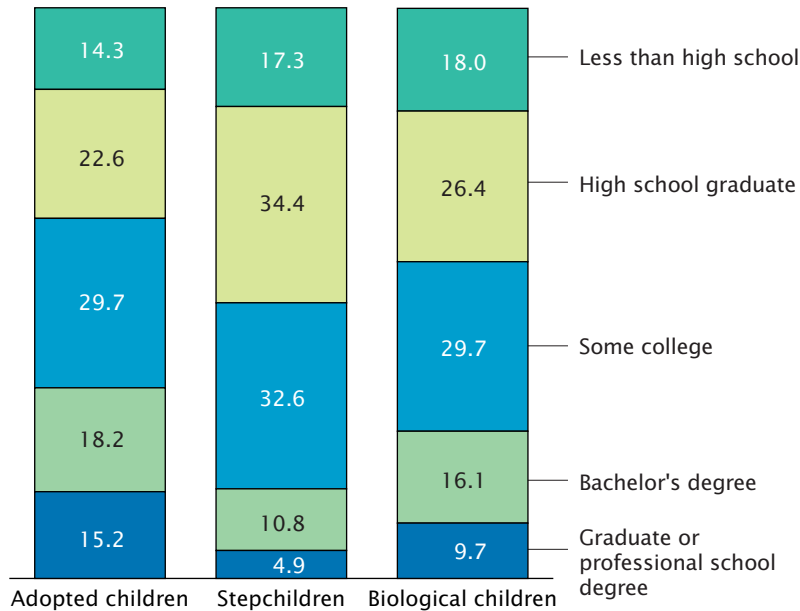
Not surprisingly, adopted children under 18 on average had a larger age difference with their householder than did biological and stepchildren.

Hernandez. "Married Couple Families With Step, Adopted and Biological Children," *Demography*, 1989, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 267-277; and Christine Bachrach. "Children in Families: Characteristics of Biological, Step, and Adopted Children," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 1983, Vol. 45, pp. 171-179.

Figure 6.

Percent of Children of the Householder Under 18 by Educational Attainment of the Householder: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

Household Income and Educational Attainment of the Householder

Table 7 profiles children by the socioeconomic characteristics of the householder. Adoptive mothers have been found to be more educated and to have higher incomes than biological mothers.³⁷ Census 2000 data support these findings and show that, for children under 18, adopted children lived in households that had higher incomes than those of either stepchildren or biological children. One-third of adopted children under 18 lived in households with incomes of \$75,000 or more, compared with 25 percent of

stepchildren and 27 percent of biological children. Eight percent of adopted children under 18 lived in households with incomes of \$150,000 or more, higher than either stepchildren (4 percent) or biological children (6 percent). Comparing median household income for these groups is another way to consider their relative affluence. While the median household income for adopted children under 18 (\$56,000) was higher than that of both biological children (\$48,000) and stepchildren (\$51,000), among children of the householder who were 18 years old and over, stepchildren had the highest household incomes, at about \$68,000, compared with \$62,000 for adopted children, and \$58,000 for biological children.

Adopted children also lived with householders who were more educated than the householders of either stepchildren or biological children (see Figure 6). Eighteen percent of adopted children under 18 lived with a householder with a bachelor's degree, compared with 16 percent of biological children and 11 percent of stepchildren. While 15 percent of adopted children under 18 lived with a householder with at least a graduate or professional school degree, just 10 percent of biological children and 5 percent of stepchildren did.

Labor Force and Homeownership

The labor force participation rates of the householder of adopted and biological children under 18 were roughly similar: 84 percent of adopted children and 86 percent of biological children lived with a householder who was in the labor force. A slightly higher percentage of stepchildren lived with a householder who was in the labor force: 90 percent. Among children of householders in the labor force, a slightly lower percentage of adopted children (3.1 percent) lived with householders who were unemployed than stepchildren (3.5 percent) or biological children (4.1 percent).

Another indicator of socioeconomic well being is whether a family owns its home. Again, adopted children appear to be in households which were economically more advantaged than those of stepchildren and biological children, since a higher percentage lived with householders who owned rather than rented their homes. While 78 percent of adopted children under 18 years old lived with householders who owned their homes, the corresponding

³⁷ Ibid.

Table 8.

Characteristics of Households Containing Children of the Householder: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

Characteristic	Number	Percent
Total households with children of householder	45,490,049	100.0
Households by type of children	45,490,049	100.0
Adopted children only	816,678	1.8
Stepchildren only	1,485,201	3.3
Biological children only	40,657,816	89.4
Adopted and biological children	808,432	1.8
Adopted children and stepchildren	29,575	0.1
Biological children and stepchildren	1,659,924	3.6
Biological children, adopted children, and stepchildren	32,423	0.1
Households with adopted children	1,687,108	3.7
One	1,383,149	3.0
Two	247,600	0.5
Three or more	56,359	0.1
Three generation households¹	3,832,527	8.4
Contains adopted children	166,058	0.4
Does not contain adopted children	3,666,469	8.1
Racial composition of the household	45,490,049	100.0
All household members of same race	41,127,347	90.4
Contains adopted children	1,378,981	3.0
Does not contain adopted children	39,748,366	87.4
Contains members of different races ²	4,362,702	9.6
Contains adopted children	308,127	0.7
Does not contain adopted children	4,054,575	8.9
Hispanic origin composition of the household	45,490,049	100.0
All household members of same origin	43,294,398	95.2
Contains adopted children	1,545,441	3.4
Does not contain adopted children	41,748,957	91.8
Contains members of differing origin ³	2,195,651	4.8
Contains adopted children	141,667	0.3
Does not contain adopted children	2,053,984	4.5

¹Householder had both a parent/parent-in-law and a child in the household, or householder had both a child and grandchild in the household.

²Not all household members report the same group, where race groups are: White alone, Black alone, American Indian and Alaska Native alone, Asian alone, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander alone, Some Other Race alone, or at least one household member reports multiple race groups.

³Household contains members who are Hispanic and members who are non-Hispanic.

Note: Households with sons and daughters of any age of the householder.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

percentage for both biological and stepchildren under 18 was 67 percent. For children 18 and over, the gap between the percentage of adopted, biological, and stepchildren who lived in owned homes was smaller, but it was still 3 percentage points higher than for stepchildren and 5 percentage points higher than for biological children.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: TYPES OF CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLDS

How many households have adopted children and what combinations of children live in households? Of the 45.5 million households in 2000 that contained householders' children of any age, most (89 percent) contained biological children only; about 3 percent of these households contained stepchildren only; and another

4 percent contained both biological and stepchildren (see Table 8). Another 2 percent contained only adopted children of the householder and an additional 2 percent contained both adopted and biological children.³⁸ Only 0.1 percent of all households with children of the

³⁸ The difference between the percentage of households that contain adopted children only and the percentage of households that contain adopted and biological children is not statistically significant.

Table 9.
Households With Stepchildren Under 18 by Householder's Living Arrangements: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

Living arrangements and marital status of the householder	Sex of stepparent			
	Male		Female	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total households with stepchildren	2,281,620	100.0	147,242	100.0
Married	2,063,999	90.5	94,674	64.3
Not married	217,621	9.5	52,568	35.7
Has unmarried partner	184,965	8.1	32,293	21.9
Never married	99,754	4.4	14,982	10.2
Formerly married	85,211	3.7	17,311	11.8
Possible partner ¹	12,448	0.5	2,798	1.9
Never married	5,534	0.2	1,165	0.8
Formerly married	6,914	0.3	1,633	1.1
No partner	20,208	0.9	17,477	11.9
Never married	5,574	0.2	5,638	3.8
Formerly married	14,634	0.6	11,839	8.0

¹Possible partner is indicated when there is only one opposite sex unrelated unmarried adult at least 15 years old and within 15 years of the age of the householder, and there are no other adults present.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

householder included biological children, adopted children, and stepchildren.

Among the 1.7 million households containing adopted children of the householder, 82 percent had just one adopted child, while 15 percent had two adopted children. Just 3 percent of these households had three or more adopted children. In addition, 166,000 households with an adopted child of the householder were three-generation households, including either a householder who had both a parent or parent-in-law and an adopted child, or a householder who had both an adopted child and a grandchild in the same household.

Table 8 shows the number of households with children of the householder that were composed of people of different races or were made up of both Hispanics and non-Hispanics. In the vast majority of these households (90 percent), all members were of the same race. Of the 1.7 million households with adopted children, about

308,000 (18 percent) contained members of different races. The adoption of foreign-born children by U.S. residents played a large role in creating these households. Of the 43.8 million households, which did not contain adopted children, 4.1 million (9 percent) included people of different race groups. Nearly all households with children of the householder were composed of either all Hispanic or all non-Hispanic members: 95 percent; 142,000 households with adopted children contained both Hispanic and non-Hispanic people, representing 8 percent of all households with adopted children.

STEPCHILDREN: CHANGING USE OF THE TERM

Traditionally, the word "stepchild" was used to mean a child who came to be related to a person through marriage to the child's parent. However, as marriage, remarriage, and cohabitation patterns have changed, the words "stepchild" and "stepfamily" now may include some families that are

formed by cohabitation rather than marriage. For example, unmarried people may identify the biological child of their current partner as their stepchild, and may either have been previously married, or never married.³⁹ The living arrangements of householders who reported a stepchild living with them indicate usage of this more recent definition.

Table 9 shows the distribution of households with stepchildren who were under 18 years old by the sex, marital status, and living arrangements of the householder. Households are shown separately for male and female householders, since the distribution across the various types of living arrangements differs by the sex of the stepparent. Nearly all stepfathers

³⁹ See Andrew J. Cherlin and Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr. "Stepfamilies in the United States: A Reconsideration," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1994, Vol. 20, pp. 359-381; and Larry L. Bumpass, R. Kelly Raley, and James A. Sweet. "The Changing Character of Stepfamilies: Nonmarital Childbearing" *Demography*, 1995, Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 425-436.

had a partner: 91 percent had a spouse and another 8 percent had an unmarried partner. A lower proportion of stepmothers had a partner: 64 percent had a spouse and 22 percent had an unmarried partner. Together, 217,000 stepparents who reported unmarried partners identified children under 18 in their households as stepchildren.⁴⁰ These children were likely the biological children of their current partner rather than the biological children of their ex-spouse. In fact, 54 percent of the stepfathers and 46 percent of the stepmothers who had an unmarried partner had never been married.

The proportions by sex of stepparents who had a possible partner in the household and were never married were similar: 44 percent of stepfathers and 42 percent of stepmothers. Lower proportions of stepparents who did not live with a partner were never married: 28 percent for stepfathers and 32 percent for stepmothers. These data reflect the changing usage of the terms “stepchild” and “stepfamily,” since they show that some householders considered themselves to be stepparents even though they were not married to the biological parent of the child in their household. Indeed, 51 percent of the currently unmarried stepfathers and 41 percent of the currently unmarried stepmothers had never been married.

⁴⁰ Besides the cases in which respondents reported household members as stepchildren of the householder even though the householder was unmarried, it is possible that some of these family situations were created when either the stepparent's marital status or the child's relationship to the householder was imputed. However, this affects only a small proportion of the cases. Just 7 percent of stepchildren who had a never-married householder received an imputed value for their relationship to the householder. Eleven percent of the never-married householders who reported having stepchildren had an imputed value for their marital status. So, the vast majority of households with unmarried stepparents were reported as such.

OTHER SOURCES OF DATA

Several nationally representative surveys conducted by government agencies provide estimates of the number of adopted and stepchildren along with their families' characteristics. Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) data make it possible to identify whether a child lives with one or two parents and the type of parent—biological, step, adopted, or foster. The SIPP sample for the 1996 panel comprised about 37,000 households. For more information see the report “Living Arrangements of Children: 1996” at www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/child/la-child.html. The National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) collected information from women aged 18 to 44 about whether they had ever adopted a child or sought to adopt a child. For more information see the NSFG Web site at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg.htm.

The National Council for Adoption (NCFA), a private nonprofit organization, has conducted several studies in which it contacted all 50 states and the District of Columbia to gain information about the number and type of adoptions within the state in 1982, 1986, 1992, and 1996. Data from the surveys, as well as an explanation of the survey methodology for the 1992 and 1996 surveys are included in the *Adoption Factbook III*, a comprehensive resource for information about adoption. See the NCFA web site at www.ncfa-usa.org for more information.

A source for information on adoptions in the United States is the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), under which states are required to collect data on all adopted children placed by the state child welfare

agency and adopted children who are receiving assistance or services from the state agency directly or under contract with another agency, whether public or private. For more information, see www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/dis/afcars, the Web site for the Children's Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families.

A source for information on international adoptions is the U.S. State Department Web site: www.travel.state.gov/adopt.html. A link on the site (www.travel.state.gov/orphan_numbers.html) provides counts of immigrant visas issued to orphans coming to the United States, presumably for adoption by U.S. citizens. This information is helpful in tracking the number of international adoptions by U.S. citizens, as well as the country of birth of the adopted children.

There are several comprehensive Web sites devoted to information about adoption. One site which also contains information about adoption statistics is the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (NAIC) at www.calib.com/naic a comprehensive resource on all aspects of adoption which is a service of the Children's Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families. The National Adoption Information Clearinghouse provides an overview of the sources of available data.

DATA QUALITY

Census 2000 sample data provide the most comprehensive national data on adopted children available since 1975,⁴¹ and include a larger sample of stepchildren than other

⁴¹ The federal government collected data from states on finalized adoptions between 1944 and 1975. See Kathy Stolley, “Statistics on Adoption in the United States,” *The Future of Children*. 1993, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 1-42.

surveys as well. The ongoing Current Population Survey does not allow identification of the type of relationship between parents and children, and the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), has a sample of about 37,000 households. The National Survey of Family Growth interviews women about the attitudes they hold, plans they have made, and actions they have taken regarding adoption, but it does not provide information about adoptive families or adopted children. The National Health Interview Survey, which identifies the type of relationship between selected children and their parents, had a sample of about 39,000 households (in 2001).

The estimate of the number of adopted children under 18 years old using Census 2000 sample data is consistent with the estimate from 1996 data from the SIPP. The SIPP survey instrument collects information about each child under 18 years, regardless of whether they are a child of the householder. In the SIPP, for each child who has a parent present in the household, the respondent is asked to identify whether the parent is the biological, step, foster, or adoptive parent of the child. The number of adopted children under 18 estimated by SIPP 1996 was 1,484,000,⁴² of which 98 percent were the children of the householder. Using the SIPP data as a guide, the Census 2000 estimate accounts for nearly all adopted children under 18. Long-form data from Census 2000 show 1,586,000 people under 18 years old who were designated as

⁴² Jason Fields. *Living Arrangements of Children: Fall 1996*, Current Population Survey Reports, P70-74, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2001.

the adopted child of the householder.⁴³ The total number of adopted sons and daughters of the householder of any age was 2,059,000.

Regarding estimates of stepchildren, 1996 SIPP data showed 4.9 million stepchildren⁴⁴ under 18 were living with *at least one stepparent*, while Census 2000 long-form data showed 3.2 million children under 18 were the stepchild of the *householder*. Census 2000 data, then, may capture about two thirds of those children under 18 years old who lived with at least one stepparent. We would expect the Census 2000 estimate to be lower than that of the SIPP, since SIPP data indicate the presence and type of both of the child's parents, while Census 2000 identifies only the type of relationship of the child to the householder. Thus, when the child's stepparent is not the householder, we are unable to count this child as a stepchild. Some children who are listed in this report as biological children of the householder may also be the stepchildren of the spouse of the householder in his or her second marriage. Other children may have a stepparent who did not reside in the household in which the child was counted in Census 2000. Nationally representative surveys do not generally collect information about the relationship between household members and nonresident parents.

⁴³ All of the Census 2000 estimates in this report are made using sample data. Aggregate numbers of children of the householder and other totals may differ from the counts based on 100 percent Census 2000 data.

⁴⁴ Jason Fields. *Living Arrangements of Children: Fall 1996*, Current Population Survey Reports, P70-74, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2001.

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

The data contained in this report are based on the sample of households who responded to the Census 2000 long form. Nationally, approximately 1 out of every 6 housing units was included in this sample. As a result, the sample estimates may differ somewhat from the 100-percent figures that would have been obtained if all housing units, people within those housing units, and people living in group quarters had been enumerated using the same questionnaires, instructions, enumerators, and so forth. The sample estimates also differ from the values that would have been obtained from different samples of housing units, people within those housing units, and people living in group quarters. The deviation of a sample estimate from the average of all possible samples is called the sampling error.

In addition to the variability that arises from the sampling procedures, both sample data and 100-percent data are subject to nonsampling error. Nonsampling error may be introduced during any of the various complex operations used to collect and process data. Such errors may include: not enumerating every household or every person in the population, failing to obtain all required information from the respondents, obtaining incorrect or inconsistent information, and recording information incorrectly. In addition, errors can occur during the field review of the enumerators' work, during clerical handling of the census questionnaires, or during the electronic processing of the questionnaires.

Nonsampling error may affect the data in two ways: (1) errors that are introduced randomly will increase the variability of the data and, therefore, should be reflected in the standard errors; and (2) errors that tend to be consistent in one direction will bias both sample and 100-percent data in that direction. For example, if respondents consistently tend to under report their incomes, then the resulting estimates of households or families by income category will tend to be understated for the higher income categories and overstated for the lower income categories. Such biases are not reflected in the standard errors.

While it is impossible to completely eliminate error from an operation as large and complex as the decennial census, the Census Bureau attempts to control the sources of such error during the data collection and processing operations. The primary sources of error and the programs instituted to control error in Census 2000 are described in detail in *Summary File 3 Technical Documentation* under Chapter 8, "Accuracy of the Data," located at www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf.

All statements in this Census 2000 Special Report have undergone statistical testing and all comparisons are significant at the 90-percent confidence level, unless otherwise noted. The estimates in tables, maps, and other figures may vary from actual values due to sampling and nonsampling errors. As a result, estimates in one category may not be significantly different from estimates assigned to a different category. Further information on the accuracy of the data is located at www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf. For further information on the computation and use of standard errors, contact the Decennial Statistical Studies Division at 301-763-4242.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the children's relationship to householders in the United States, visit the U.S. Census Bureau's Internet site at www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/ms-la.html. Data on children and on the relationship of various household members to the householder from Census 2000 Summary File 3 were released on a state-by-state basis during the summer of 2002. Census 2000 Summary File 3 data are available

on the Internet via factfinder.census.gov and for purchase on CD-ROM and on DVD.

For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, sampling error, and definitions, also see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf or contact our Customer Services Center at 301-763-INFO (4636).

Information on other population and housing topics is presented in the Census 2000 Briefs and Census 2000 Special Reports series, located on the U.S. Census Bureau's Web site at www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs.html. These series present information on race, Hispanic origin, age, sex, household type, housing tenure, and other social, economic, and housing characteristics.

For more information about Census 2000, including data products, call our Customer Services Center at 301-763-INFO (4636), or e-mail webmaster@census.gov.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge the assistance of Kelly Holder in the preparation and development of tables in this report.