

Study: Grandparents living with their grandchildren, 2011

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Tuesday, April 14, 2015

In 2011, close to 600,000 grandparents aged 45 and older, or about 8% of all grandparents in this age group in Canada, lived in the same household as their grandchildren.

Overall, there were about 7 million grandparents in private households in 2011. Grandparents had 4.2 grandchildren on average.

Among grandparents living with their grandchildren, the vast majority (88%) lived with at least one middle-generation person ("multigenerational households"). Of these "co-residing" grandparents, 53% lived with couples, 32% lived with a lone parent and 3% had another middle-generation situation.

The remaining co-residing grandparents (12%) were in "skip-generation" households, that is, with no middle-generation present.

About half of grandparents living with their grandchildren had at least some responsibility for household payments, suggesting that many provided some financial support to their grandchildren.

Grandparents in skip-generation households and those living with lone parents were more likely to make household payments than those living with couples.

For example, 80% of co-residing grandparents in skip-generation households and 75% of those living with a lone parent had some financial responsibility for household payments. This compared with 28% among co-residing grandparents who lived with a middle-generation couple.

Proportion of co-residing grandparents higher among those who reported an Aboriginal identity

The 600,000 grandparents living with their grandchildren in 2011 represented 4% of the overall population aged 45 and older.

In some groups, however, persons aged 45 and older were more likely to be grandparents living with their grandchildren.

Individuals aged 45 and older who reported an Aboriginal identity, for instance, had a higher proportion of grandparents living with their grandchildren (11%). That percentage was higher for the Inuit population (22%).

There were also relatively higher proportions among individuals aged 45 and older who reported a Traditional Aboriginal Spirituality (20%) as their religious affiliation and within the Nunavut population in this age group (24%).

Co-residing grandparents with an Aboriginal identity were also more likely than other co-residing grandparents to live in skip-generation households, and to have more responsibilities for household payments.

Recent immigrants more likely to be co-residing grandparents

The proportion of co-residing grandparents was also higher among immigrants, particularly those who came to Canada between 2006 and 2011 ("recent" immigrants).

In 2011, 21% of recent immigrants aged 45 and older were co-residing grandparents, compared with less than 3% of the Canadian-born population in the same age group.



Some population groups had even higher proportions of co-residing grandparents than did recent immigrants. This was the case among those who most often spoke Punjabi (or Panjabi) at home, of whom 44% of the population aged 45 and older were grandparents living with their grandchildren.

Reflecting the higher percentages seen among Punjabi speakers, the proportion of co-residing grandparents was also higher among those who reported a Sikh (39%) religious affiliation, most of whom spoke Punjabi at home. Hindus also had a relatively higher proportion of co-residing grandparents (18%).

Sikh, Hindu and Punjabi-speaking co-residing grandparents were more likely to live with a middle-generation couple, situations in which they were less likely to be a financial maintainer.

More than 650,000 children aged 24 and under living with their grandparents in Canada

Of the 8.9 million children aged 24 and under who lived in a census family in 2011, more than 650,000, or 7%, co-resided with their grandparents.

In the majority of cases (62%), these children lived with two parents along with their grandparents, 29% lived with one parent and their grandparents, and 9% lived solely with their grandparents.

Note to readers

In this study, data from the National Household Survey (NHS) were used to identify the number of grandparents living with grandchildren based on a population aged 45 and older in private households.

Additional data from the 2011 cycle of the General Social Survey (GSS) on Family were used to obtain an estimate of the total number of grandparents in the country. The reason is because grandparents who do not live with grandchildren cannot be identified with NHS data. The GSS is not conducted in the territories; nevertheless, when co-residing grandparents living in the territories are excluded from the NHS sample, the proportion of co-residing grandparents still amounts to 8% of the overall population of grandparents as measured by the GSS.

Two types of household living arrangements were examined: (1) grandparents living with grandchildren and no middle generation present, called "skip-generation households;" and (2) grandparents living with at least one middle-generation person (most often the children's parents), called "multigenerational households." The latter group was further divided in three additional sub-categories: those who lived with a couple, with a lone parent, or with another middle-generation situation.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [4501](#) and [5178](#).

The article "Diversity of grandparents living with their grandchildren" is now available online in *Insights on Canadian Society* ([75-006-X](#)). From the *Browse by key resource* module of our website, choose *Publications*.

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca).

To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Anne Milan (613-220-5440; anne.milan@statcan.gc.ca), Demography Division.

For more information on *Insights on Canadian Society*, contact Sébastien LaRochelle-Côté (613-951-0803; sebastien.larochelle-cote@statcan.gc.ca).