

A Fresh Look at Black Family Households with Children in the United States

The *Fresh Look* Data Point Series is part of a suite of products produced by the Black Families Flourishing (BFF) project intended to expand knowledge about Black families with children in the United States. (Read an introduction to the *Fresh Look* Data Point Series [here](#).) The products will serve as the foundation for other work emanating from BFF. Additional foundational products include a conceptual model that is a roadmap for how BFF research is designed; [a review of research focused on Black families that spans 100 years \(1920–2020\)](#); [a white paper that conceptualizes and defines Black family flourishing](#); and a white paper that explores how researchers, policymakers, and practitioners have defined family over time, including how these definitions have facilitated or constrained access to systems for Black families (forthcoming).

Across BFF’s work, **Black people** refers to individuals who may identify as African American—including those who were primarily born in the United States and are descended from enslaved Africans who survived the trans-Atlantic slave trade—as well as the smaller populations of people living in the United States who may identify as Black African or Afro-Caribbean. Black also includes individuals who reported being Black alone or in combination with one or more races or ethnicities in their responses to the U.S. Census—for instance, an individual who identifies as Black only, as well as someone who identifies as Black and White combined or Afro-Latino.

Black families are defined as a group of at least one self-identified Black adult and/or child(ren), related by birth, marriage, adoption, or choice. Families must have children, and those children can be up to age 25.

Introduction

Families are complex, multifaceted, and often described as the cornerstone of a well-functioning society. For families that include children, there is overwhelming acknowledgment that parents and other caretakers play key and pivotal roles in supporting children’s growth and development, which in turn can help to facilitate societal advancement. In 2024, over 47.4 million U.S. family households had at least one child of any age, representing more than half of all households with two or more related individuals nationwide.ⁱ These households reflect varied family structures (e.g., couples, single parents) and living arrangements (e.g., multigenerational households). These households also differ by family race, ethnicity, and other characteristics.

This data point helps to shed light on Black family households with children. Like all households across the country, Black family households with children reflect diverse household structures and living arrangements that are influenced by historical, economic, and social factors.ⁱⁱ Highlighting where Black families with children are concentrated geographically is important for understanding how their distribution compares with that of the overall Black population and offers insights about where Black family life is most prevalent relative to population size. Understanding these issues can help to inform research, policy, and practice relevant to Black families.

Expanding the Definition of Black Family Households with Children

Research on Black family householdsⁱⁱⁱ often relies on Census definitions of “households” and “family households.” The Census categorizes the racial background of family households with children based on the race of the householder. For instance, if the person who owns or rents a housing unit identifies as Black alone, then the household is considered a Black household. However, this categorization does not account for families in which the householder identifies as Black in combination with another race or Latino ethnicity, or families in which a non-Black householder is caring for a child identified as Black. Capturing multiracial identities within Black family households may provide a more holistic, nuanced understanding of how Black families are represented in demographic data. Additionally, existing analyses of family households consistently report children as individuals aged 18^{iv} or younger.^v With individuals eligible to remain on their parents’ health insurance through age 25 and many young adults continuing to live with their families at home after age 18,^{vi} including families with young adult children offers a more accurate representation of today’s family households.

Defining Households

Householder: The person (or one of the people) in whose name the home is owned, being bought, or rented.

Family household: A household that includes a person up to age 25 (age 25 or younger) who is related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Black family household: A family household that includes at least one child up to age 25, in which either the youngest child in the household or a primary caregiver (i.e., biological parent, stepparent, adoptive parent, grandparent) is Black.

Note: The definition of “householder” is based on the U.S. Census.^{vii} The Black Family Flourishing team developed the definitions of “family household” and “Black family household.”

Traditional householder-based definitions may undercount key caregiving structures in Black families. To ensure that definitions of family households encompass all children who reside in them and that the family structures of all individuals who identify as Black are reflected in Black family households, we expand on the Census definitions of family households and Black family households in our analyses (see the Defining Households text box above for definitions). These definitions are an intentional effort to acknowledge the different types of caregiving relationships and family structures that reflect Black families in a nationally representative sample. By centering family households as the unit of analysis, we aim to capture the realities of family life, including the ways that children can be cared for and supported within Black family households. This data point builds on existing analyses of U.S. family households by describing Black family households in the United States with children up to age 25 as compared to the Black population overall. Highlighting the proportion of these two groups geographically illuminates population density and regional patterns across the United States.

Key Findings

The proportion of Black family households with children ranges from 2% to 57% across all states and the District of Columbia (DC). About 1 in 6 U.S. family households with children are Black family households. The five states with the highest proportion of Black family households are those in the South (DC, 57.3%; Mississippi, 42.8%; Georgia, 37.1%; Maryland, 36%; and Louisiana, 35.9%). The five states with the smallest proportion are predominantly Western states, with Maine as the exception (Montana, 2.1%; Idaho, 2.5%; Wyoming, 3.4%; Utah, 3.4%; and Maine, 4.5%).

Table 1 shows, by state, the count of Black family households with children and the percentage of these households out of all U.S. family households with children. It also includes the count of the Black U.S. population and the percentage of these individuals out of the total U.S. population.

Table 1. Total U.S. Black Family Households and Black Population by State

State	Household-level analysis of U.S. family households with children		Individual-level analysis of the U.S. population		Percent difference
	Black family households (Number)	Black family households (% of total U.S. family households)	Black population (Number)	Black population (% of total U.S. population)	
National	7,786,134	17.5%	47,846,196	14.4%	3.1%
Alabama	205,245	31.0%	1,388,919	27.5%	3.5%
Alaska	7,094	7.4%	38,224	5.2%	2.2%
Arizona	86,375	9.1%	466,477	6.4%	2.7%
Arkansas	79,010	19.2%	495,217	16.3%	2.9%
California	465,935	8.8%	2,833,037	7.2%	1.6%
Colorado	59,611	7.9%	329,411	5.7%	2.2%
Connecticut	90,146	18.2%	489,131	13.6%	4.6%
Delaware	39,465	30.6%	250,555	24.9%	5.7%
District of Columbia	38,596	57.3%	313,474	46.6%	10.7%
Florida	606,491	22.5%	3,895,317	17.8%	4.7%
Georgia	555,061	37.1%	3,642,778	33.7%	3.4%
Hawaii	11,077	6.3%	53,447	3.7%	2.6%
Idaho	6,231	2.5%	26,072	1.4%	1.1%
Illinois	305,201	17.7%	1,962,313	15.5%	2.2%
Indiana	134,712	14.5%	765,007	11.2%	3.3%
Iowa	36,654	8.8%	174,110	5.4%	3.4%
Kansas	39,733	10.1%	223,861	7.6%	2.5%
Kentucky	79,853	12.9%	439,444	9.7%	3.2%
Louisiana	222,811	35.9%	1,529,078	33.1%	2.8%
Maine	7,375	4.5%	34,565	2.5%	2.0%
Maryland	311,383	36.0%	2,000,591	32.4%	3.6%
Massachusetts	131,489	14.0%	702,441	10.0%	4.0%
Michigan	244,056	18.6%	1,548,582	15.4%	3.2%
Minnesota	92,985	12.3%	495,292	8.7%	3.6%
Mississippi	174,408	42.8%	1,130,893	38.3%	4.5%
Missouri	133,821	16.4%	797,062	12.9%	3.5%
Montana	2,642	2.1%	12,351	1.1%	1.0%
Nebraska	25,910	9.7%	127,650	6.5%	3.2%
Nevada	64,087	15.6%	375,453	12.0%	3.6%
New Hampshire	8,450	4.8%	36,757	2.6%	2.2%
New Jersey	240,824	17.9%	1,424,655	15.4%	2.5%
New Mexico	13,698	5.2%	72,453	3.4%	1.8%
New York	554,460	21.3%	3,511,162	17.7%	3.6%

State	Household-level analysis of U.S. family households with children		Individual-level analysis of the U.S. population		Percent difference
	Black family households (Number)	Black family households (% of total U.S. family households)	Black population (Number)	Black population (% of total U.S. population)	
North Carolina	378,871	26.8%	2,423,690	22.9%	3.9%
North Dakota	7,703	7.7%	33,747	4.3%	3.4%
Ohio	299,732	19.0%	1,731,235	14.7%	4.3%
Oklahoma	71,364	13.2%	385,040	9.6%	3.6%
Oregon	29,161	5.5%	136,865	3.2%	2.3%
Pennsylvania	280,925	16.6%	1,685,901	13.0%	3.6%
Rhode Island	20,624	14.4%	106,258	9.7%	4.7%
South Carolina	217,465	31.8%	1,418,349	27.2%	4.6%
South Dakota	6,113	5.3%	27,885	3.1%	2.2%
Tennessee	203,330	21.6%	1,231,024	17.6%	4.0%
Texas	686,467	15.9%	4,139,477	14.0%	1.9%
Utah	16,178	3.4%	70,275	2.1%	1.3%
Vermont	3,451	4.6%	14,765	2.3%	2.3%
Virginia	298,726	25.4%	1,846,770	21.3%	4.1%
Washington	89,942	8.7%	464,612	6.0%	2.7%
West Virginia	16,158	7.3%	85,869	4.8%	2.5%
Wisconsin	82,525	11.0%	449,342	7.6%	3.4%
Wyoming	2,510	3.4%	9,313	1.6%	1.8%

Source. The Black Families Flourishing team’s analysis of 2019–2023 five-year American Community Survey (ACS) microdata from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota.

Note. We conducted analyses on Black family households at the household level and analyses on the Black population at the individual level. These data are combined in one table to illustrate the relative difference between household- and individual-level percentages by state given that most nationally representative data on Black people in the United States focuses on individuals rather than family households. We calculated the percentage of Black family households with children up to age 25 by dividing the number of Black family households with children up to age 25 by all family households with children up to age 25. We calculated the percentage of the Black population by dividing the number of people who self-identified as Black by the total number of people in the population. The percent difference column indicates the difference in percentage points between the percentage of Black family households and the percentage of the Black population. See the Methodology box at the end of the data point for additional information about creating these groups.

Implications

Our analysis shows the largest concentration of Black family households across states is in the South, which is consistent with other analyses of the national Black U.S. population.^{viii} This is not surprising given the prominent role Southern states played in enslavement of Black people in the America. Our findings also reveal variation in the geographic distribution of Black family households with children, highlighting states where their proportion varies from the overall U.S. Black population. Data show higher proportional representation of Black family households compared to the overall Black population in every state, which suggests that Black families are more centrally present in the caregiving landscape than individual-level population statistics alone indicate.

We also found that states with larger Black populations show greater variation between the proportion of Black family households and the overall Black population compared to states with smaller Black populations. This variation may reflect more diverse living arrangements (e.g., more Black families living with young

adults^{ix}) or slightly higher than average fertility rates^x among Black families with children up to age 25 in these states, indicating areas for further investigation. In addition, conducting analyses on whether family characteristics vary within states, such as the age and number of children in Black family households, may provide insight into the type of caregiving supports families may need at the local level.

Analyses of data with national samples of Black families have often focused narrowly on parents' or caregivers' marital status when describing the family structure,^{xi} which may overlook the role of a broader constellation of family members that contribute to the caregiving responsibilities of and financial support to Black households.^{xii} Taking a more holistic view of family structure that is inclusive of, but is not limited to, variations in caregivers' marital status can provide an opportunity to better understand nuances of Black family life such as how families leverage their social networks.

These data point findings are an important first step toward better understanding Black family characteristics across the country and can also be used to inform research, policy, and practice.

- **For research, our findings underscore the importance of using family-level indicators to understand Black family life across regions, as individual-level data alone may not fully reflect the realities of families with children.** Future research should consider the importance of factors like the ongoing return of Black people and families to the South^{xiii} as well as intergenerational co-residence for Black families. Research questions to consider include: How do Black families with children establish new (or maintain existing) support systems to promote their well-being when relocating to a new area? How do multigenerational households contribute to Black families' financial stability and wealth building?
- **For policy, considering the needs of children up to age 25 offers an opportunity to design, refine, and integrate policies relevant to children at and across various developmental stages.** Existing policies often emphasize the value of early investments in family and child well-being (i.e., economic and child care supports, home visiting and community-level interventions and programs) when children are young.^{xiv} Ensuring the continued consideration of families with children through age 25 might better support family flourishing. For instance, public policies often vary based on child age, with a heavy emphasis on early and middle childhood, and these policies are largely limited to family policy (e.g., child care, child tax credit) and education policy (e.g., universal pre-K).^{xv} In addition, some policies appear to be more punitive or compliance-oriented as children get older (e.g., school discipline policies^{xvi}). Policy questions to consider include: How do policies provide continuous support for Black families with children from early childhood through emerging adulthood? Which policy levers could be better coordinated and strengthened to inform alignment and sustained investments across a broader range of policy areas?
- **For practice, organizations should have access to data on the characteristics of families in their service area and be supported in using that data in actionable ways.** Understanding where families live and the contexts that inform their daily experiences could allow for targeted outreach efforts to connect families with available support. These types of local data initiatives have been implemented recently in communities across the country.^{xvii} Possible practice questions include: What resources do Black families with children need to access the amenities in their neighborhood? What influence do these resources have on families' overall quality of life?

As the first data point in the *Fresh Look* series, our analysis adds an additional layer of perspective about nationally representative research on Black families with children in the United States. Our work also illustrates the importance of understanding Black family life in relation to geographic location and sets the stage for future data points that will further illuminate and investigate characteristics and nuances of Black family households across the country.

Methodology

To better understand Black family households with children up to age 25, we drew on 2019–2023 five-year American Community Survey (ACS) microdata from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota. The data contain information on individuals, including householders, who self-identified as Black alone or in combination with other races and/or Latino ethnicity. The key steps in our analysis included the following:

- **Identifying the Black population.** We classified Individuals marked as “yes” on the IPUMS RACBLK variable^{xviii} as Black.
- **Identifying Black family households.** As described in the Defining Households text box, we defined a Black family household as a household that includes at least one child up to age 25, in which either the youngest child in the household or a primary caregiver (i.e., biological parent, stepparent, adoptive parent, grandparent) is Black. In the households where at least one parent is present, we coded the household as Black when either the youngest child or a parent is/the parents are Black. In the households where parents are not present, we coded the household as Black when either the youngest child or a grandparent is/the grandparents are Black. In other words, grandparents’ races were only considered in households without parents. Households that included Black children without a caregiver (e.g., a 25-year-old Black person living on their own) and Black children in households with their spouses without their own children or caregivers (e.g., 20-year-old Black person with their partner) were excluded.
- **Calculating the percentage of Black family households.** To calculate the percent of Black family households, we divided the total number of Black family households with children up to age 25 by the total number of family households with children up to age 25. Like our calculation of Black family households, we excluded households that included children without a caregiver (e.g., a 25-year-old Hispanic person living on their own) and children in households with their spouses without their own children or caregivers (e.g., 20-year-old White person with their partner).
- **Calculating the percentage of the Black population.** To calculate the percentage of the Black population, we divided the total number of people self-identifying as Black by the total number of people in the U.S. population.

Suggested Citation

*Rochester, S. E., *Yadatsu-Ekyalongo, Y., Richards, K., & Lloyd, C. M. (2026). *A fresh look at Black family households with children in the United States*. Child Trends. <https://blackfamiliesflourishing.org/data-insights-hub/>

(*denotes equal authorship contribution)

References

- ⁱ U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). *Family households by age of householder: 2024*. Retrieved October 24, 2025, from <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/family-households-by-age-of-householder-2024.html>
- ⁱⁱ Lloyd, C. M., Alvira-Hammond, M., Carlson, J., & Logan, D. (2021). *Family, economic, and geographic characteristics of Black families with children*. Child Trends. <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/family-economic-and-geographic-characteristics-of-black-families-with-children>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Walton, J. R., Wood, A., Walker, V. P., & Wells, J. M. (2024). From striving to thriving: Mitigating anti-Black family racism to maximize health outcomes in Black children. *Academic Pediatrics*, 24(7), S132–S138. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2023.08.013>
- ^{iv} U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). *Family groups: 2023*. Retrieved November 1, 2025, from <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/family-groups-2023.html>
- ^v U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). *America's families and living arrangements: 2023*. Retrieved November 1, 2025, from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2023/demo/families/cps-2023.html>
- ^{vi} U.S. Census Bureau. (2025). *Historical living arrangements of adults: Figure AD-1 young adults living in the parental home [<1.0 MB]*. Retrieved November 1, 2025, from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/families/adults.html>
- ^{vii} U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Householder*. Retrieved October 12, 2025, from <https://www.census.gov/glossary/?term=Householder>
- ^{viii} Martinez, G., & Passel, J. S. (2025). *Facts about the U.S. Black population*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/fact-sheet/facts-about-the-us-black-population/>
- ^{ix} Fry, R., Passel, J. S., & Cohn, D. (2020). *A majority of young adults in the U.S. live with their parents for the first time since the Great Depression*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/09/04/a-majority-of-young-adults-in-the-u-s-live-with-their-parents-for-the-first-time-since-the-great-depression/>
- ^x Matthews, T. J., & Hamilton, B. E. (2019). Total fertility rates by state and race and Hispanic origin: United States, 2017. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 68(1). https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr68/nvsr68_01-508.pdf
- ^{xi} Smock, P. J., & Schwartz, C. R. (2020). The demography of families: A review of patterns and change. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 9–34. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7329188/>
- ^{xii} Taylor, R. J., Skipper, A. D., Cross, C. J., Taylor, H. O., & Chatters, L. M. (2022). Racial/ethnic variation in family support: African Americans, Black Caribbeans and non-Latino Whites. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 84(4), 1002–1023. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9469895/>
- ^{xiii} Frey, W. H. (2022). *A 'new great migration' is bringing Black Americans back to the south*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/a-new-great-migration-is-bringing-black-americans-back-to-the-south/>
- ^{xiv} Guarino, A. (2025). *Federal investments are the foundation for state and local early care and education programs*. First Five Years Fund. <https://www.ffyf.org/resources/2025/06/federal-foundation/>
- ^{xv} L'Hôte, E. & Volmert, A. (2021). *Why aren't kids a policy priority? The cultural mindsets and attitudes that keep kids off the public agenda*. FrameWorks Institute. <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/resources/why-arent-kids-a-policy-priority-the-cultural-mindsets-and-attitudes-that-keep-kids-off-the-public-agenda/>
- ^{xvi} Perera, R. M., & Diliberti, M. K. (2023). *Survey: Understanding how U.S. public schools approach school discipline*. Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/survey-understanding-how-us-public-schools-approach-school-discipline/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- ^{xvii} González, A. (2026). *Community data for environmental justice*. Urban Institute. <https://localdataforequitablecommunities.org/community-data-environmental-justice>
- ^{xviii} IPUMS USA. (n.d.). *RACBLK*. Retrieved June 19, 2025, from https://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/variables/RACBLK#description_section