Family Complexity and Children's Well-Being

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What is family complexity?

The combination of family structure (presence and marital status of parents) and sibling composition (half, step, bio siblings) (Manning, Brown, and Stykes 2014)

DATA

2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), Wave 1

• Nationally representative panel survey with detailed demographic and relationship information

FAMILY COMPLEXITY MEASURES

Number of siblings

Type of siblings: Biological Step, Half, Adopted

Parents in the home: Two parents, Mother only, Father only, Guardian

CHILD WELL-BEING MEASURES (each measure dichotomous 1=yes, 2=no)

Extracurricular Outcomes

SIBLINGS in the Household: 2014

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No siblings

4 or more siblin

No siblings

4 or more sibl

4 or more siblings

Two parents

Two parents

Club

OF PARENTS in the Household: 2014

No siblings

In a Club

Club

Percent of Children Ages 6-17 in Extracurricular Activities by TYPE OF

Percent of Children Ages 6-17 in Extracurricular Activities by NUMBER OF

Percent of Children Ages 6-17 in Extracurricular Activities by PRESENCE

Grayed area in figures shows 90% confidence interval

Extracurricular Activities: Plays a sport, Takes Lessons, In a Club

School Experiences: In a gifted class,

Ever expelled from school, Ever held back a grade

The 2014 SIPP has a more accurate estimate of half siblings, compared to previous SIPP data

Changes to the 2014 survey and editing process that affect these estimates:

- Full fertility history collected from men and women, including new multiple partner fertility questions, shows whether children have the same two parents
- In previous panels, a respondent identified the relationship between every person in the household
- This is now determined from fertility and demographic questions in the survey

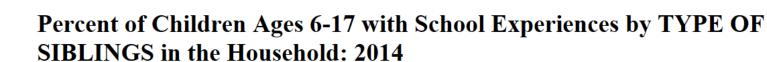
Type of Siblings in the Household All Children: 2009 vs 2014

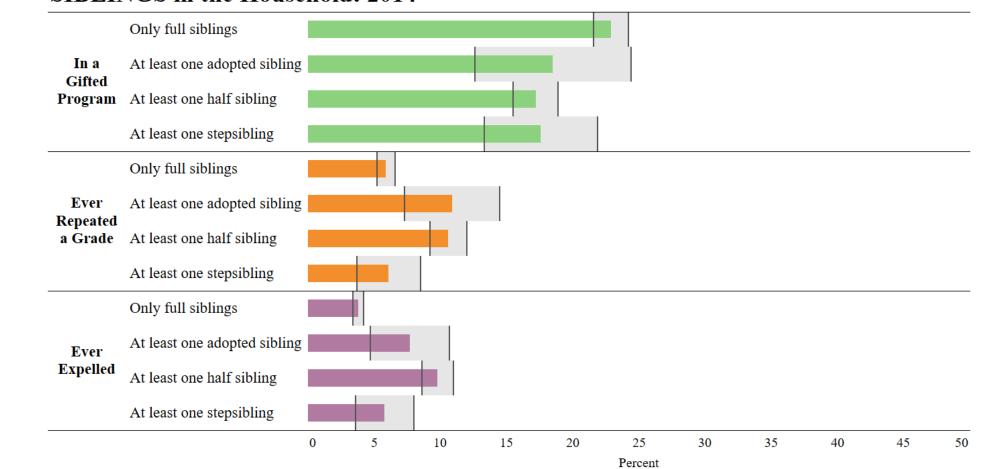
	All Children			
	2009		2014	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Children	74,130	100	73,540	100
Living with:				
At least one sibling	57,740	77.9	57,600	78.3
Only full siblings	47,620	64.2	42,280	57.5
At least one stepsibling	1,267	1.7	1,642	2.2
At least one adopted sibling	1,231	1.7	1,560	2.1
At least one half sibling	7,987	10.8	12,540	17.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation 2014, Wave 1. Kreider, R., and R. Ellis. 2011. "Living Arrangements of Children: 2009 Household Economic Studies."

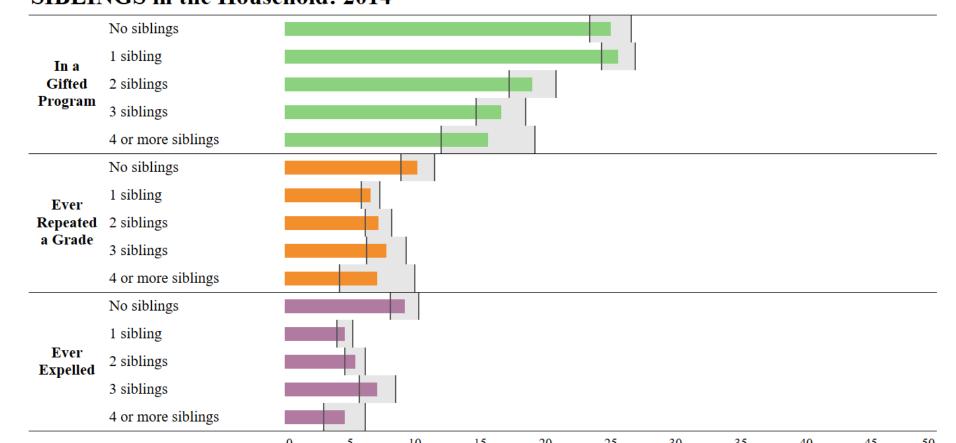
Is family complexity associated with child well-being?

School Outcomes

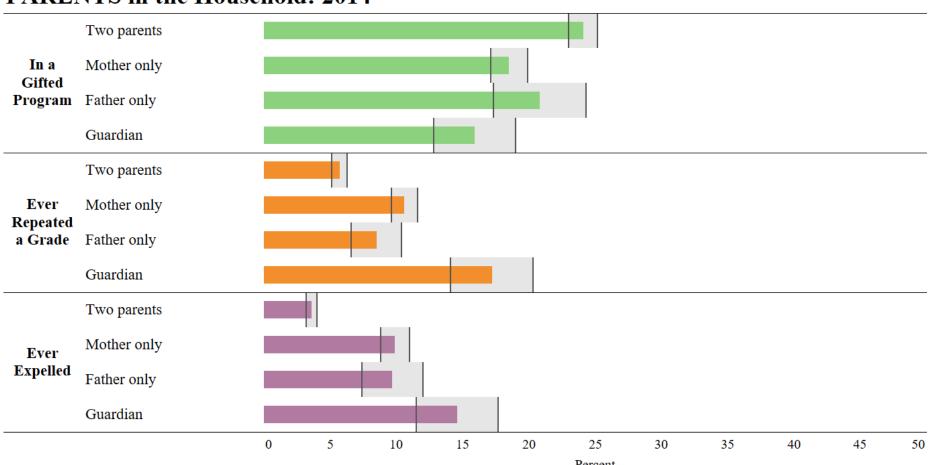




Percent of Children Ages 6-17 with School Experiences by NUMBER OF **SIBLINGS** in the Household: 2014



Percent of Children Ages 6-17 with School Experiences by PRESENCE OF **PARENTS** in the Household: 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation 2014, Wave 1

What about when controlling for race/origin and poverty?

Logistic Regression Results: Likelihood of Participating in Extracurricular Activities and School Experiences Only statistically significant (p<0.05) results shown

Family Complexity Variables	Extracurricular Activities	School Experiences
No half/step siblings (ref group) At least one half/step sibling	Takes lessons -	Ever repeated a grade Ever been expelled
<i>No siblings (ref group)</i> 1-2 siblings	Takes lessons 🚚	Ever been expelled —
3 or more siblings	Plays a sport Takes lessons	In a gifted program Ever repeated a grade Ever been expelled
Two parents (ref group) Mother only	Plays a sport Takes lessons	Ever repeated a grade Ever been expelled
Father only	Takes lessons Involved in a club	Ever been expelled
Guardian	Plays a sport Takes lessons Involved in a club	In a gifted program Ever repeated a grade Ever been expelled

Regression model includes: Type of sibling, number of siblings, parents present in the home, poverty status, race/origin, and child's age Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation 2014, Wave 1

Yes, family complexity is associated with child well-being, even when controlling for race/origin and poverty.

Complex sibling arrangements are not uncommon in families today. However, children living with fewer siblings, only biological siblings, or with two parents had higher extracurricular involvement and more positive school experiences. Controlling for race and poverty narrowed this gap, but did not erase this relationship.

> Scan to see more info, including tables and references



