

Parenthood and Partnerships Among Young Adults

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Motivation: Gain more insight into the experiences of young parents

- Delays in childbearing have not been consistent; strong divergence in marriage and childbearing trends based on social class (Lundberg, Pollak, and Stearns 2016).
- Decades of research on the transition to early parenthood and longitudinal outcomes in their own adult lives.
- Less known about the current experiences of young parents; how they are navigating emerging adulthood and parenthood.

Motivation: Gain more insight into the experiences of young parents

- Seltzer (2019) has argued that in order for demographers to better understand families, greater attention must be paid to the *relationships* of individuals within them.

This paper shows:

Living
Arrangements

Demographic
Profile of
Young Parents

Parental
Involvement
Patterns

Research Questions

- What are the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of young parents, compared to nonparents?
- What are the current living arrangements of young parents, compared to older parents?
- What are the parental involvement patterns of young parents, compared to older parents?

Data and Definitions:

2018 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP):

Nationally representative, longitudinal panel survey administered by the U.S. Census Bureau with detailed socioeconomic, demographic, and relationship information








- **Young Parents:** Biological parents aged 15-22
- **Young Nonparents:** Young adults aged 15-22 with no biological children
- **Older Parents:** Biological parents aged 23-50
- **Reference Parent:** The adult who answers questions about children in the household. All RPs included here live with at least one of their biological children in the appropriate age range. RPs answer questions about the children's involvement with their "**other parent.**"
- **Other Parent:** The child's parent who is not the reference parent

Methods

- Statistical testing of group differences using replicate weights

Results: Demographic Profile

Compared to nonparents, young adults who are parents are:

Age		High school degree or less	
White alone	N.S.	Some college	
Black alone	N.S.	In labor force	
All other races, race combinations	N.S.	Family income below poverty line	
Hispanic (any race)		Received SNAP benefits in the last 12 months	








Note: Green arrow denotes a positive significant difference compared to young nonparents, while a red arrow denotes a negative significant difference compared to young nonparents. Statistical significance = $p < .10$.

N.S. = not significant.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2018.

Results: Living Arrangements

Compared to older parents, young parents...

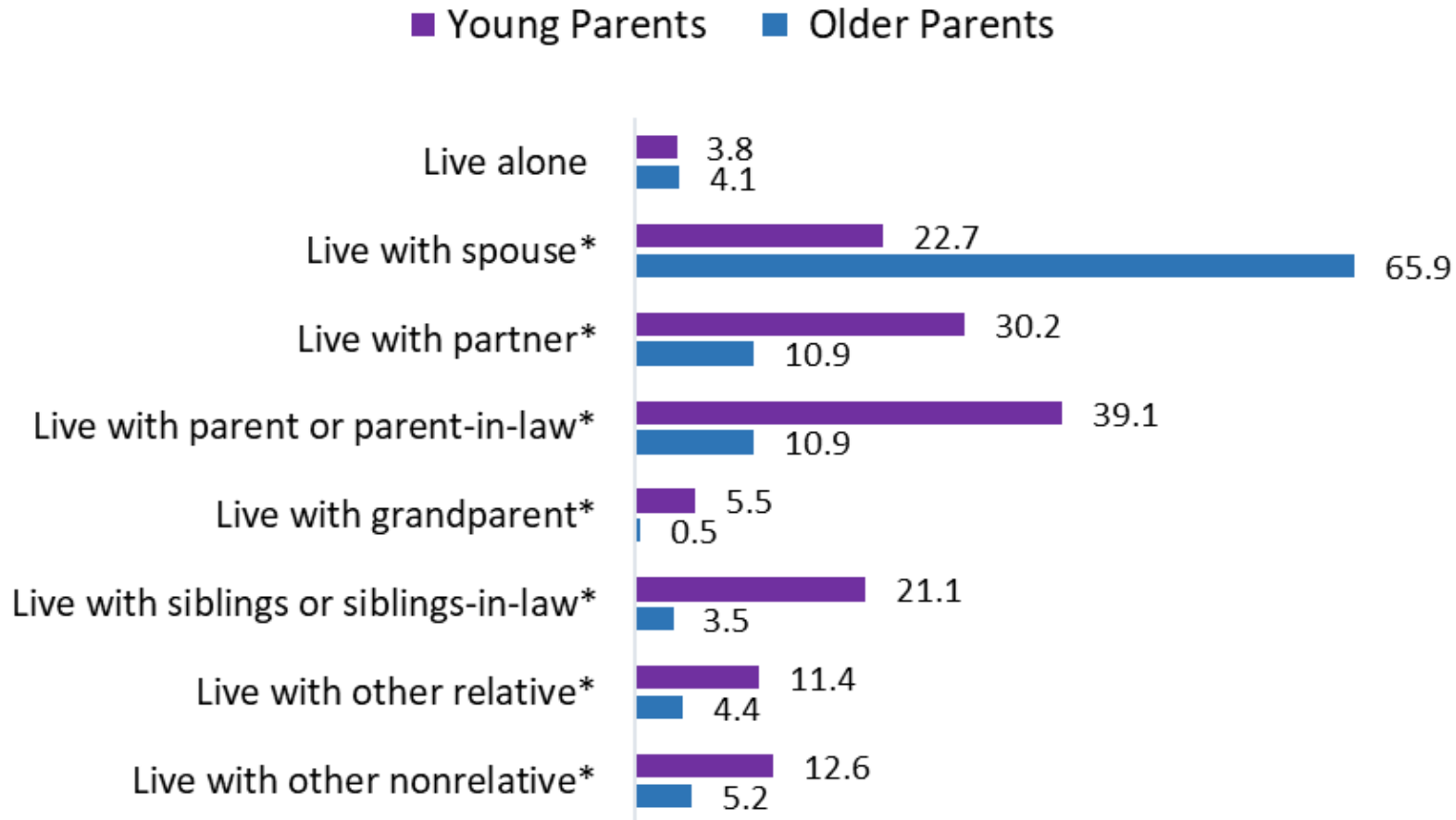
Live with a spouse		Live with at least one of their children	
Share biological children with their spouse		Have multiple partner fertility	
Live with a partner		Solo parent	
Share biological children with their partner			

Note: Green arrow denotes a positive significant difference compared to older parents, while a red arrow denotes a negative significant difference compared to older parents. Statistical significance = $p < .10$. N.S. = not significant.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2018.

Living Arrangements of Young and Older Parents: 2018

(In percent)




Results:

Parental Involvement Patterns

Grouped by partnership (Partnered or Solo)




Compared to older partnered parents, young partnered parents...

Partnered Parents			
Parents living with 0–17-year-old children		Parents living with 0–5-year-old children	
Reference parent had dinner with children 5+ times a week	N.S.	Reference parent went out with children 2+ times a week	
Other parent had dinner with children 5+ times a week	N.S.	Other parent went out with children 2+ times a week	N.S.

Note: Green arrow denotes a positive significant difference compared to older partnered parents, while a red arrow denotes a negative significant difference compared to older partnered parents. Statistical significance = $p < .10$. N.S. = not significant.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2018.

Compared to older solo parents, young solo parents...

Solo Parents			
Parents living with 0–17-year-old children		Parents living with 0–5-year-old children	
Reference parent had dinner with children 5+ times a week		Reference parent went out with children 2+ times a week	
Other parent had dinner with children 5+ times a week		Other parent went out with children 2+ times a week	N.S.

Note: Green arrow denotes a positive significant difference compared to older solo parents, while a red arrow denotes a negative significant difference compared to older solo parents. Statistical significance = $p < .10$. N.S. = not significant.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2018.

Summary

- Young parents are more socioeconomically disadvantaged than young adults who are not parents, more likely to be in the labor force.
- About half of young parents are living with a spouse or partner, compared to 77 percent of older parents.
- Young parents are more likely to solo parent, but also more likely to live with other relatives or nonrelatives.

Summary

- For **partnered** parents, young and older parents have similar levels of engagement with their children when it comes to sharing meals 5+ times a week.
- For **solo** parents, young reference and other parents had dinner with their children more often than older reference and other parents.
 - Young **solo** reference parents were also more likely to go on outings twice per week with their children than older solo reference parents.

Conclusion

- Young parents may be more economically vulnerable than other young adults, but this does not prevent them from engaging with their children.
- Living in households with additional family and nonfamily members may help to meet the demands of daily life and parenting.

References

- Lundberg, S., R.A. Pollak & J. Stearns (2016). Family Inequality: Diverging Patterns in Marriage, Cohabitation, and Childbearing. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 30(2): 79-102.
- Seltzer, J. A. (2019). Family Change and Changing Family Demography. *Demography*, 56(2), 405-426.

Thank You

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