

Abstract  
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### Young Adults Living at Home: Variations by Attainment and Geography

This paper investigates the relationship between educational attainment among young adults aged 18 to 34 and the probability of living with one or both parents. This topic is of interest because moving out of the parental home and establishing an independent household is traditionally considered to be an important life course transition. Additionally, researchers have paid particular attention in recent years as the numbers of young adults living with their parents grew during the Great Recession.

In general, the trend of young adults living with one or both parents has been increasing for several decades. Mykyta and Vespa (2013) found that the percent of young adults living with a parent has increased from 27.8 percent in 1967 to 31.2 percent in 2013. This increase was sharpest among those 18 to 24 (Fustenberg 2010). An especially large increase in young adults living with parents occurred during the Great Recession of 2007 to 2009, suggesting larger economic conditions influence the probability of living independent (Fry 2013, Fry and Passel 2014). Consistent with the theory that limited financial resources will constrain the options of living arrangements, people who are unemployed or have low levels of educational attainment are more likely to live with their parents than people with bachelor's degrees or employment (Fry 2013, Mykyta 2013, Mykyta and Vespa 2014).

This paper uses data from the 2013 American Community Survey (ACS), an annual survey whose large sample size allows calculation of estimates across levels of geography. With this in mind, this paper examines the probability of living with parents across states, as well as the traditional demographic characteristics of age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, attainment, and employment status. The term "living with parent" refers to any young adult age 18 to 34 who is living in the same household with at least one biological, step, or adoptive parent.

Table 1 shows the probability of living with parent across age, attainment, race, and sex. Overall, 33 percent of young adults live with their parent(s). This percent is slightly over half for people 18 to 24 years old, but drops to 14 percent for people aged 30 to 34. People who identified as White alone or Asian alone were also less likely than Black or Hispanic people to live with a parent, although the differences across race groups were not as large as they were across age groups. While 31 percent of White young adults lived with a parent, 38 percent of Black young adults did so. Men were more likely than women to live with a parent (35 percent compared to 30 percent). The patterns observed here are consistent with earlier research. Of particular concern in this research is the role of educational attainment in living arrangements. While 40 percent of young adults with less than a high school education still lived with a parent, this probability fell by nearly half (down to 22 percent) for people with a bachelor's degree. Young adults with a masters, professional, or doctorate degree had just an 11 percent chance of

living with a parent. Educational attainment is generally correlated with many other factors that might influence living arrangements, such as age, school enrollment, employment, and earnings. This is shown in Table 2, which shows the relation between education and enrollment by whether or not the young adult was employed. Nearly half (49 percent) of young adults who were unemployed lived with a parent, but this percent for people with a job was just 29 percent. Among the unemployed, education did not greatly reduce the chances of living with a parent at many levels of education. People with a bachelor's degree had nearly the same probability of living at with a parent (49 percent) as people with less than a high school education (48 percent).

Being employed greatly reduced the chances of living with a parent at every level of education, although the difference in this probability varied by attainment. Having a job reduced the chance of living with a parent for young adults with less than a high school education from 50 percent to 31 percent. For people with a graduate degree, employment reduced the probability by 25 percent, while the comparable change for high school graduates was just 14 percent.

Employed people with less than a high school diploma were still less likely to live with a parent than unemployed college graduates. People with any employment (excepting high school graduates) were less likely to live with a parent than even unemployed people with a graduate degree or higher.

The probability of living with a parent also varied across states (Table 3). The percent of young adults living at home ranged from a low of 15 percent in North Dakota to a high of 45 percent in New Jersey. Among young adults with less than a high school education, just 33 percent lived with a parent while in Alaska this rose 53 percent. Despite the strong effect of having a bachelor's degree on the ability to live alone, one-third or more of college graduates in Connecticut and New Jersey still lived with a parent. Although the population with a master's, professional, or doctorate degree, is the least likely to live with a parent, 5 states had young adult population that where 15 percent or more of them did so (Mississippi, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey). The variation of educational attainment across states is so great that a high school graduate in North Dakota and someone with a master's degree in New Jersey both have a 19 percent change of living with a parent.

It is worth noting that states with the lowest percent of young adults living with a parent tend to be located in the Midwest or Great Plains areas and lack large urban areas. The exception to this is the District of Columbia, which has a unique concentration of educated young adults immigrating. The states with the highest percentage of young adults living with a parent also tend to have large urban areas.

Greater educational attainment is associated with a lesser probability of living with a parent. However, this relationship is weakened by employment status. Surprisingly, the percent of young adults living with a parent ranged greatly across states with a 30 point span between the highest and lowest states.

Additional analysis is needed to author explore the relationship between attainment, geography, and the probability of young adults loving with a parent. It may be that a lower

living costs in rural states make it easier to establish an independent household than in more heavily populated areas. Alternatively, greater distances between potential employment opportunities or colleges may push young adults in rural areas to leave home earlier than in more accessible urban areas.

In particular, a multivariate model that also controls for the effects of local housing costs, employment opportunities, and income may help explain the observed geographic variation in the relationship between attainment and living arrangements.

## REFERENCES

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Table 1. Percent of Young Adults Ages 18 to 34 of Living with at Least One Parent, by Age, Attainment, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex: 2013

All	32.8
18 to 24 years	50.9
25 to 29 years	24.6
30 to 34 years	14.1
Less than high school	40.1
High school graduate or equivalent	39.3
Some college	34.3
Bachelor's degree	21.6
Master's degree or higher	10.9
White alone	31.4
Black alone	37.5
Asian alone	31.7
Hispanic (of any race)	37.3
Male	35.1
Female	30.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey

Table 2. Percent of Young Adults Ages 18 to 34 of Living with at Least One Parent, by Attainment and Employment Status: 2013

All unemployed	49.4
Less than high school	49.7
High school graduate or equivalent	53.1
Some college	46.5
Bachelor's degree	49.0
Master's degree or higher	34.9
All employed	28.9
Less than high school	30.8
High school graduate or equivalent	36.3
Some college	32.6
Bachelor's degree	20.0
Master's degree or higher	9.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey

State		Educational Attainment				
		Less than high school	High school graduate or equivalent	Some college	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree or higher
Alabama	34.5	43.4	41.1	34.0	18.5	8.9
Alaska	31.6	53.0	36.2	28.2	15.7	14.1
Arizona	30.7	38.3	37.3	31.1	16.0	7.0
Arkansas	26.8	35.4	30.1	27.2	14.6	4.3
California	37.9	35.3	43.8	43.9	25.7	13.3
Colorado	24.4	40.7	34.1	23.8	10.8	6.0
Connecticut	38.3	44.6	44.8	40.6	33.0	15.4
Delaware	34.8	42.7	43.2	33.8	26.5	10.7
District of Columbia	15.5	46.4	35.5	18.5	6.0	2.7
Florida	38.1	43.5	42.6	40.1	26.1	14.9
Georgia	32.2	40.2	38.7	32.5	19.3	9.3
Hawaii	33.0	44.6	37.0	33.8	27.0	9.7
Idaho	23.9	38.2	32.5	19.2	11.3	6.0
Illinois	35.7	43.8	43.0	40.2	23.7	10.9
Indiana	28.9	42.8	35.5	26.0	16.5	7.7
Iowa	20.6	39.5	28.6	18.5	10.2	3.2
Kansas	23.4	33.2	32.8	22.5	12.6	4.5
Kentucky	28.6	38.1	34.9	27.4	17.2	6.1
Louisiana	31.7	41.5	35.9	31.5	17.3	8.8
Maine	27.8	48.3	36.2	24.6	16.3	6.5
Maryland	36.8	39.8	45.4	41.5	27.6	10.9
Massachusetts	33.7	49.4	42.7	36.4	26.1	10.0
Michigan	33.6	46.5	40.2	33.1	22.0	11.3
Minnesota	25.6	43.8	34.7	25.0	14.6	6.1
Mississippi	35.0	46.7	38.7	32.9	21.9	15.0
Missouri	27.6	41.4	34.1	27.4	15.9	8.1
Montana	22.8	49.0	26.4	19.1	12.0	7.8
Nebraska	22.0	34.2	33.4	21.1	9.6	3.5
Nevada	31.4	35.6	36.6	31.3	17.1	12.1
New Hampshire	33.1	51.5	38.4	31.1	26.6	15.1
New Jersey	44.6	42.1	49.2	52.7	38.4	18.7
New Mexico	34.6	40.2	40.9	35.9	15.7	9.6
New York	38.5	41.5	43.6	45.4	29.7	17.7
North Carolina	29.3	39.0	37.9	29.3	14.8	6.7
North Dakota	15.0	35.2	18.7	12.6	10.5	5.3
Ohio	30.1	42.9	37.8	28.6	18.8	9.0
Oklahoma	25.2	35.6	29.6	24.4	11.4	5.5
Oregon	25.3	37.0	33.2	23.5	15.1	5.6
Pennsylvania	34.6	45.9	41.6	33.8	27.4	11.6
Rhode Island	35.4	41.7	40.8	36.4	30.3	14.1
South Carolina	31.3	40.2	38.3	30.5	18.7	7.7
South Dakota	18.4	39.3	25.6	14.5	6.7	3.7
Tennessee	30.8	41.7	36.9	30.7	17.7	8.0
Texas	31.9	35.6	38.1	34.4	17.7	9.2
Utah	27.2	42.2	37.4	25.5	11.7	9.5
Vermont	25.9	45.8	37.9	19.5	19.0	3.9
Virginia	30.1	39.9	38.1	31.3	21.6	8.9
Washington	27.3	39.3	35.6	27.2	13.7	7.9
West Virginia	31.7	38.5	36.8	30.6	20.4	14.3
Wisconsin	27.2	44.2	36.0	25.3	14.5	6.3
Wyoming	20.9	34.6	27.9	21.0	5.4	4.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey