

Characteristics of Children's Families

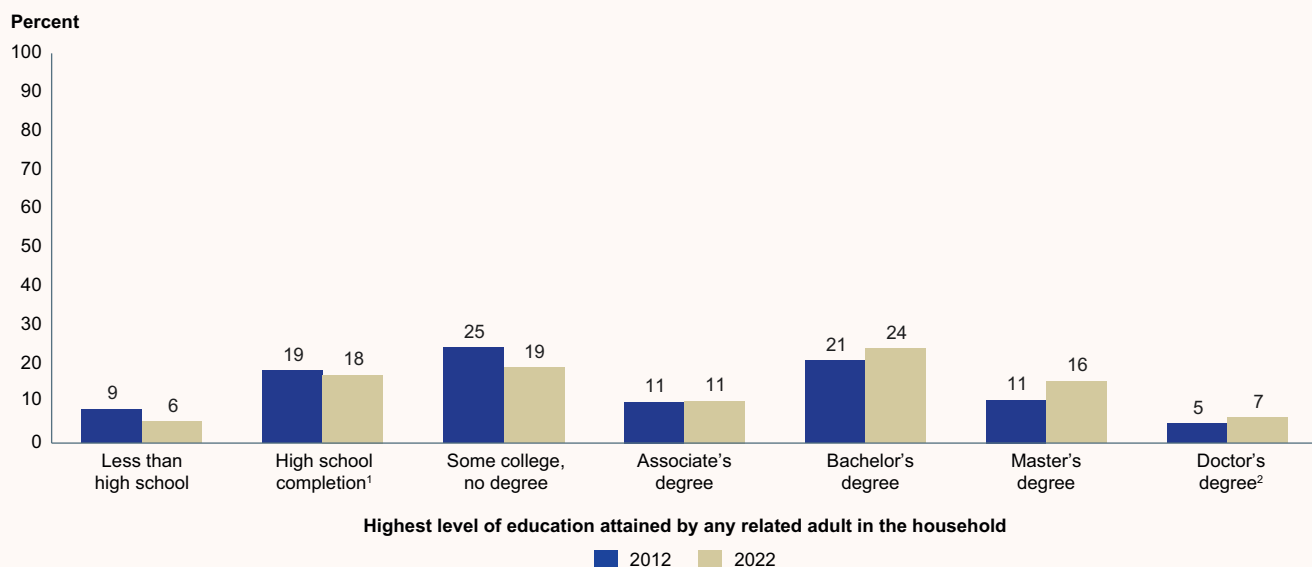
In 2022, some 42 percent of children lived in households in which no related adult had attained a college degree, 26 percent lived with a related female householder (no spouse present), and 8 percent lived with a related male householder (no spouse present). In 2022, some 16 percent were in families living in poverty.

Characteristics of children's families are associated with children's educational experiences and their academic achievement.^{1,2,3} Prior research has found that living in a household with lower parental educational attainment, living in a single-parent household, and living in poverty are associated with poor educational outcomes. For more information on the relationship between family socioeconomic status and later postsecondary and employment outcomes, see the *Condition of Education 2019 Spotlight* indicator [Young Adult Educational and Employment Outcomes by Family Socioeconomic Status](#). This indicator focuses on children living with a related householder.⁴ These are children under the age of 18 who live in a household and are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption; children married to the householder are excluded.

Educational Attainment of Related Adults

FIGURE 1.

Percentage distribution of children under age 18 living with a related householder, by highest level of education attained by any related adult in the household: 2012 and 2022



¹ Includes related adults who completed a high school diploma or an equivalency credential such as a GED.

² Includes related adults who attained professional degrees.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population residing within the United States, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This figure includes only children under the age of 18 who live in a household and are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Children married to the householder are excluded. A householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. Related adults include adults who were related to the child and the householder or were themselves the householder. Related adults exclude adults who were related to the child but not to the householder. Educational attainment of the related householder was considered even if the householder was under age 18. Figures are plotted based on unrounded data. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding in the data labels.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data, 2012 and 2022. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2023*, table 104.70.

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education an individual has completed. In this indicator, educational attainment is examined for adults in the household who were related to the child (collectively referred to as “related adults”).⁵ In 2022, some 58 percent of children under age 18 lived in households in which at least one related adult had attained a college degree (an associate’s or higher degree). Specifically,

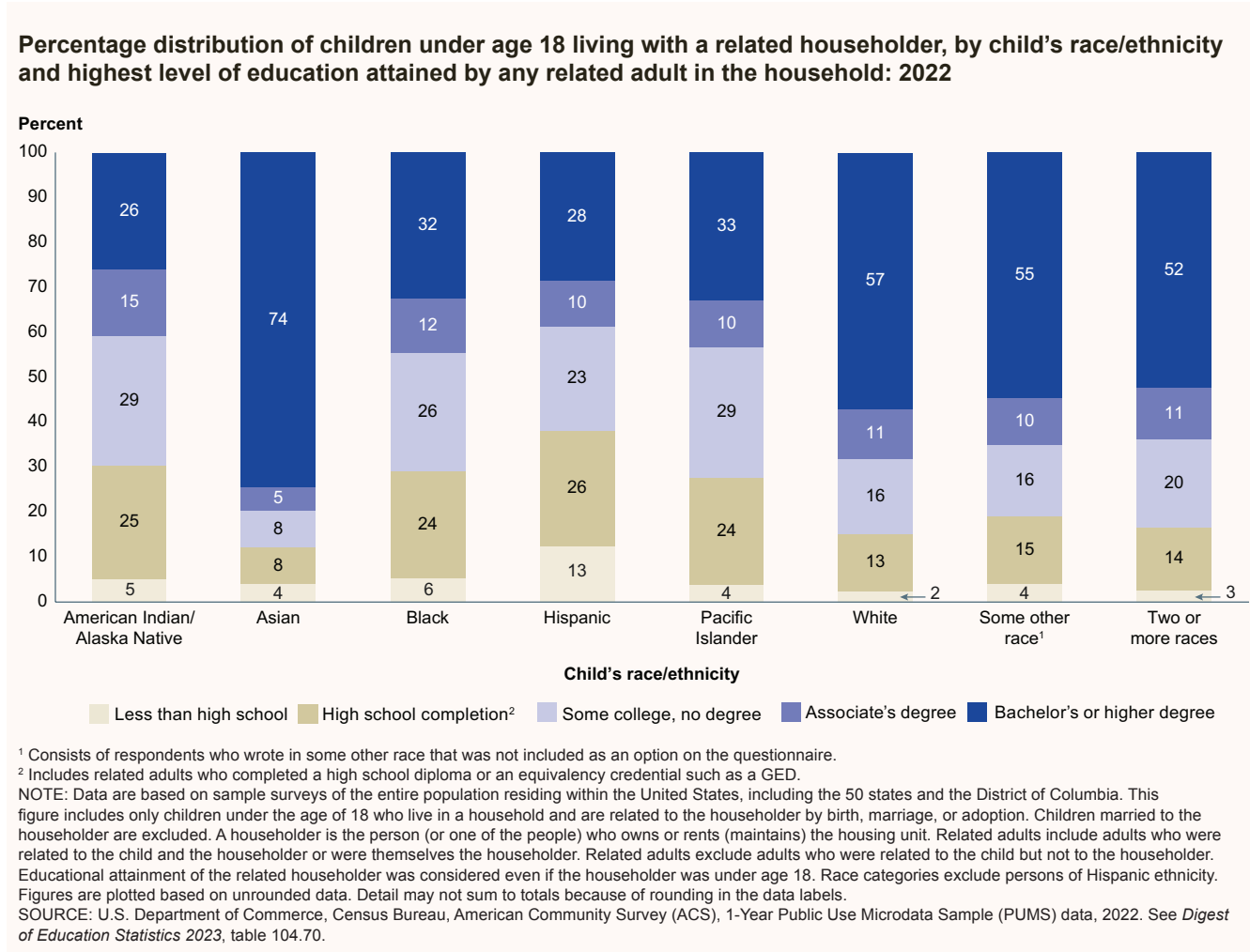
- 11 percent lived in households in which the highest level of education attained by any related adult was an associate’s degree;
- 24 percent lived in households in which the highest level of education attained by any related adult was a bachelor’s degree;
- 16 percent lived in households in which the highest level of education attained by any related adult was a master’s degree; and
- 7 percent lived in households in which the highest level of education attained by any related adult was a doctor’s degree.⁶

Conversely, 42 percent of children lived in households in which no related adult had attained a college degree. Specifically,

- 6 percent lived in households in which no related adult had completed high school;
- 18 percent lived in households in which the highest level of education attained by any related adult was high school;⁷ and
- 19 percent lived in households in which the highest level of education attained by any related adult was some college but they did not receive a degree.

The percentage of children who lived in households in which at least one related adult had completed a bachelor’s or higher degree was higher in 2022 than in 2012 (47 vs. 37 percent). This was true at all degree levels from bachelor’s through doctor’s. For example, in 2022, some 24 percent of children lived in households in which the highest level of education attained by any related adult was a bachelor’s degree, compared with 21 percent in 2012.

FIGURE 2.



The highest level of education attained by any related adult varied across racial/ethnic groups in 2022. The percentage of children under age 18 who lived in households in which no related adult had completed high school was

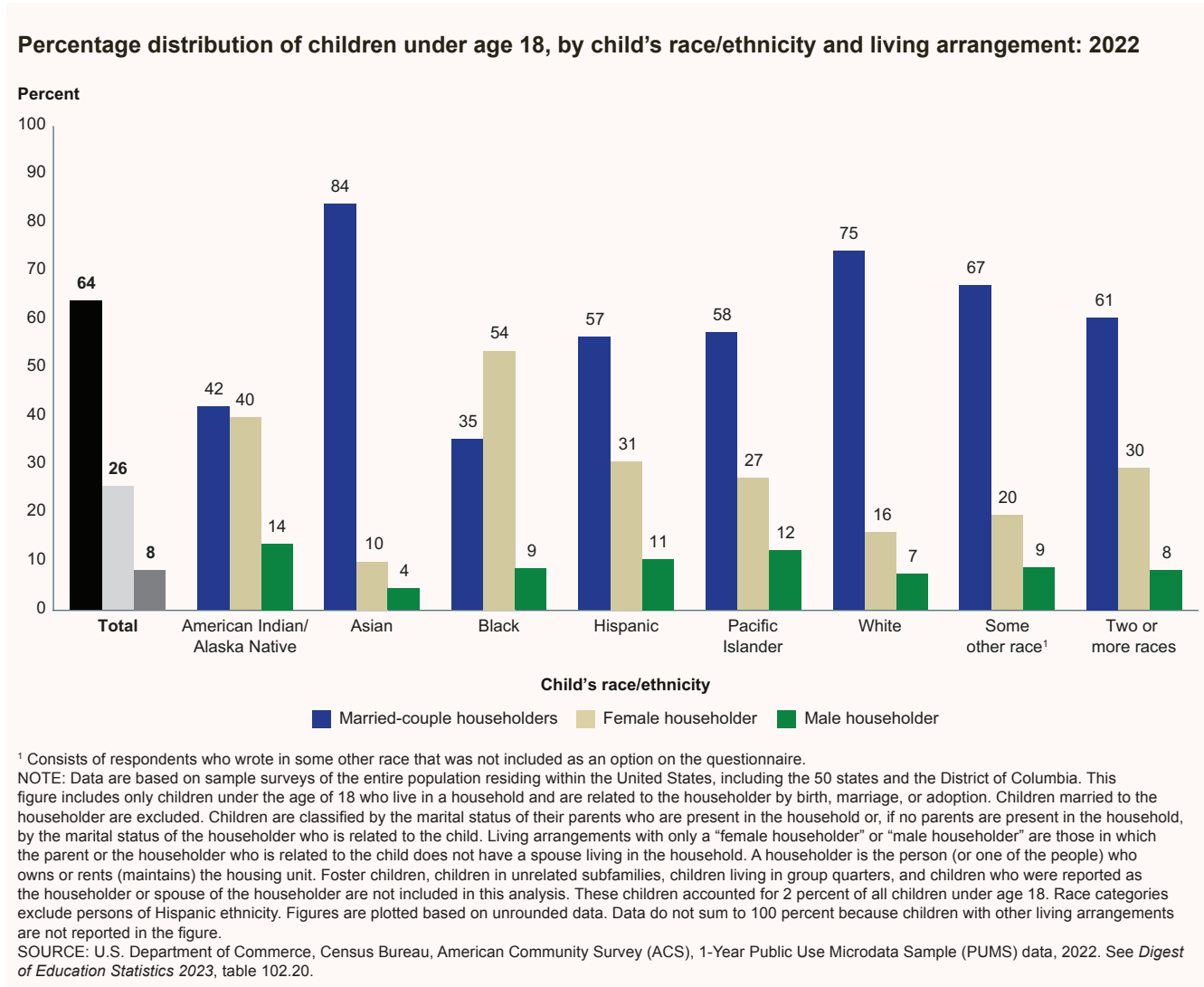
- highest for Hispanic children (13 percent); and
- lowest for White children (2 percent).⁸

In 2022, the percentage of children who lived in households in which the highest level of education attained by any related adult was a bachelor's or higher degree was

- highest for Asian children (74 percent); and
- lowest for American Indian/Alaska Native children (26 percent).

Children's Living Arrangements

FIGURE 3.



In 2022, the living arrangements⁹ of children under age 18 varied overall and by race/ethnicity. Overall,

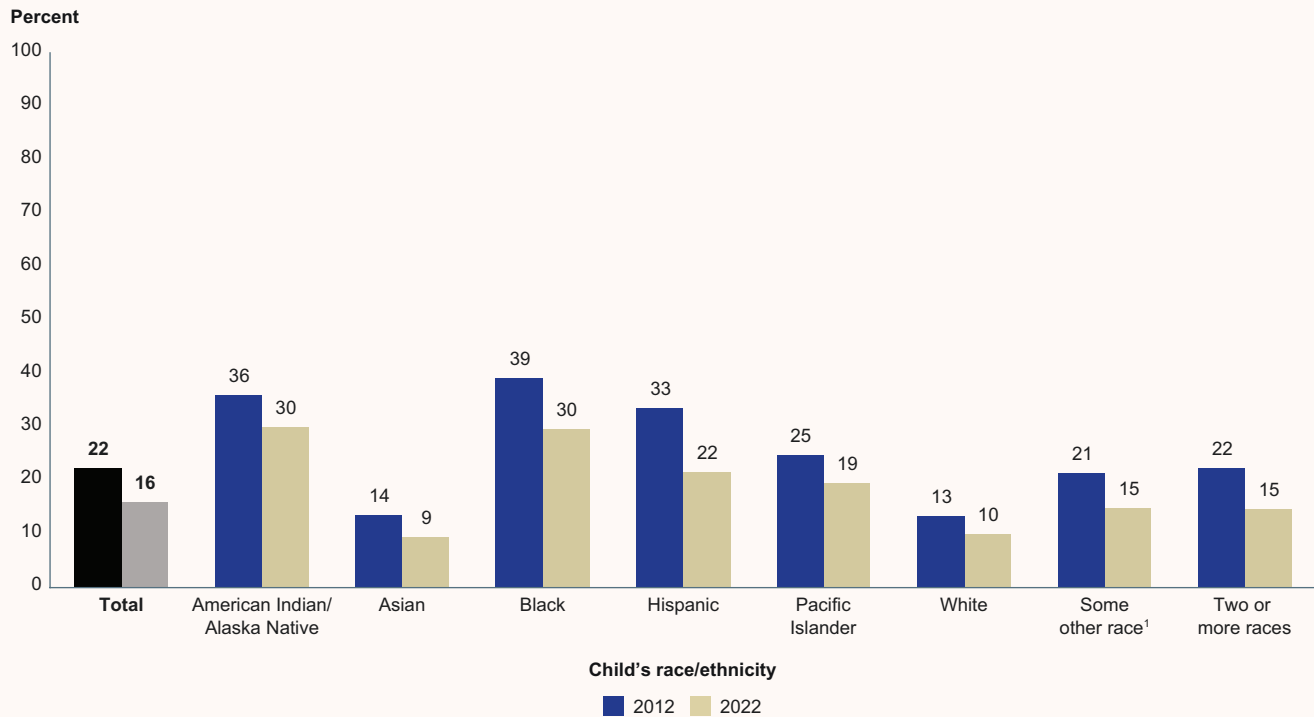
- 64 percent of children lived with related married-couple householders;
- 26 percent of children lived with a related female householder; and
- 8 percent of children lived with a related male householder.

A majority of children in each racial/ethnic group lived in married-couple households, except for children who were American Indian/Alaska Native or Black. Among Black children, a larger percentage of children lived with a female householder (54 percent) than with married-couple householders (35 percent).

Children Living in Poverty

FIGURE 4.

Among children under age 18 living with a related householder, percentage in families living in poverty, by child's race/ethnicity: 2012 and 2022



¹ Consists of respondents who wrote in some other race that was not included as an option on the questionnaire.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population residing within the United States, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This figure includes only children under the age of 18 who live in a household and are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Children married to the householder are excluded. A householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. This figure excludes unrelated children and householders who are themselves under the age of 18. Respondents were interviewed throughout the given year and reported the income they received during the previous 12 months. Poverty status is determined by the Census Bureau using a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition. For additional information about poverty status, see <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Figures are plotted based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data, 2012 and 2022. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2023*, table 102.60.

Approximately 11 million children under age 18 related to a householder were in families living in poverty in 2022.¹⁰ The poverty rate for children living with a related householder in 2022 (16 percent) was lower than in 2012 (22 percent). With the exception of Pacific Islander children, for whom the poverty rate was not measurably different between the 2 years, this pattern was observed for children living with a related householder across racial/ethnic groups. For example, the poverty rate for Hispanic children was 22 percent in 2022, compared with 33 percent in 2012. Similarly, the poverty rate for Black children was 30 percent in 2022, compared with 39 percent in 2012.

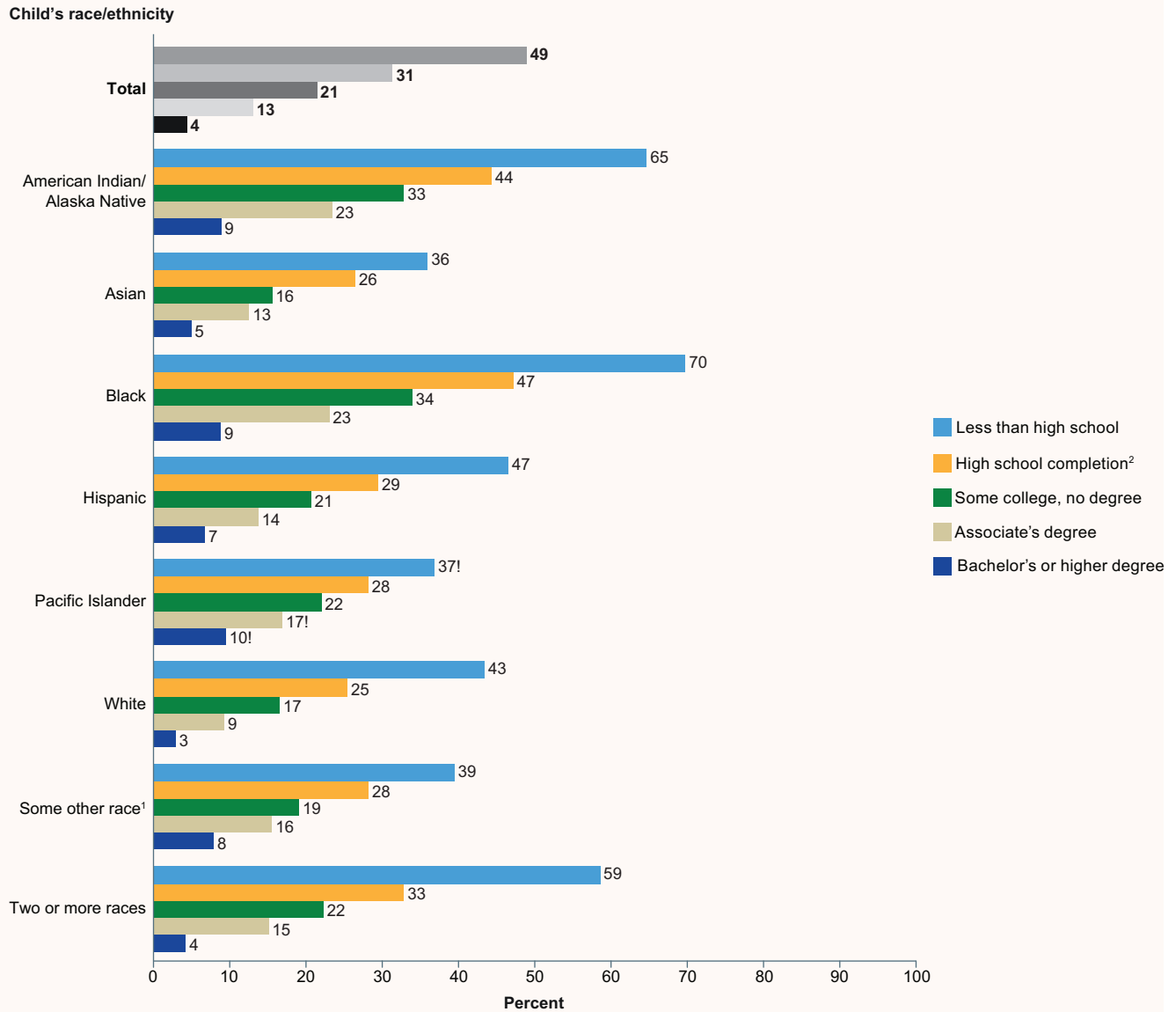
The poverty rate for children living with a related householder varied across racial/ethnic groups in 2022. Poverty rates were higher than the U.S. average (16 percent) for children living with a related householder who were

- American Indian/Alaska Native (30 percent);
- Black (30 percent); and
- Hispanic (22 percent).

Meanwhile, the poverty rates for children who were of Two or more races (15 percent), White (10 percent), and Asian (9 percent) were lower than the U.S. average. The poverty rates for Pacific Islander children and children of Some other race¹¹ were not measurably different from the U.S. average.

FIGURE 5.

Among children under age 18 living with a related householder, percentage in families living in poverty, by child's race/ethnicity and highest level of education attained by any related adult in the household: 2022

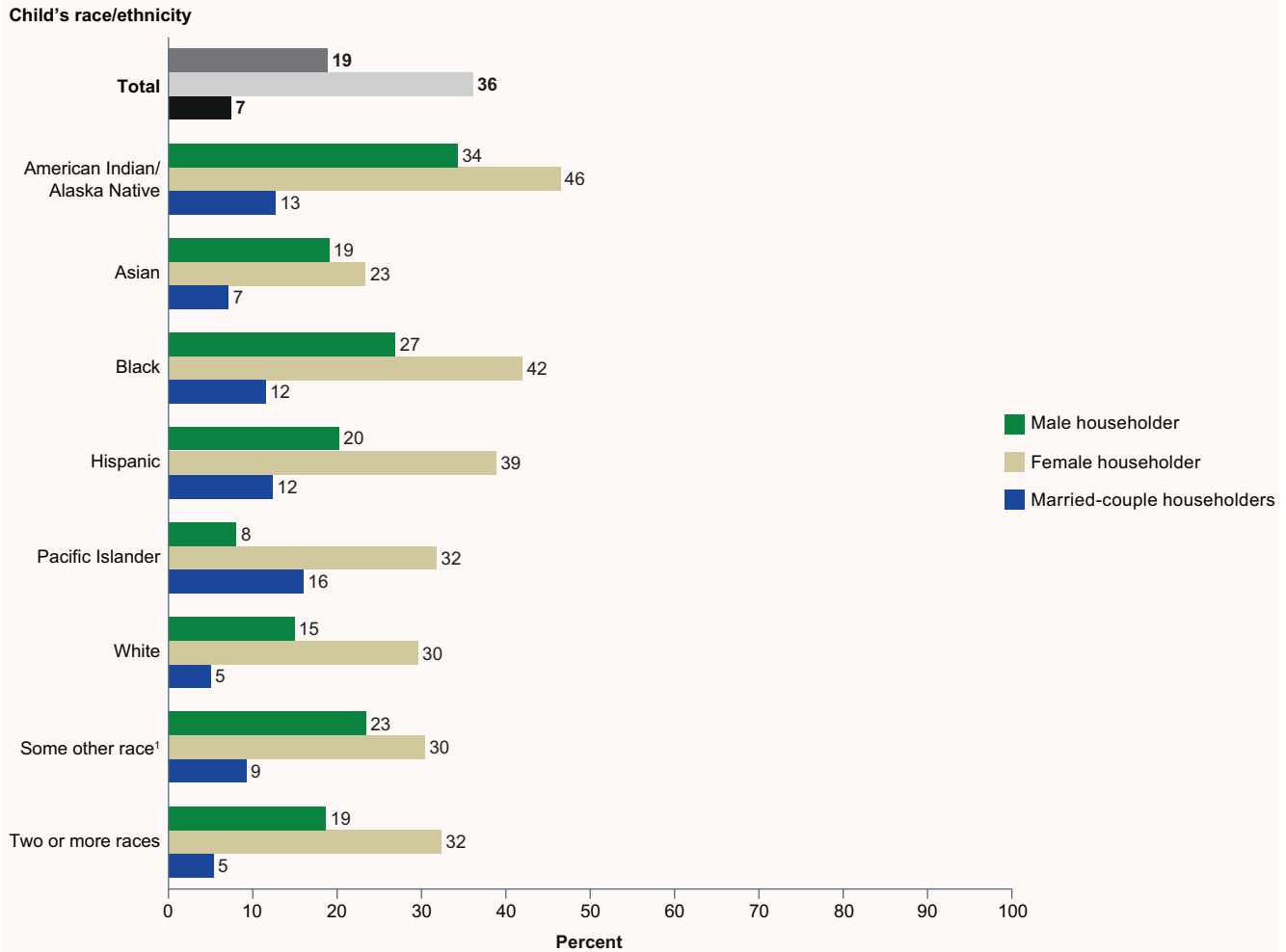


! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.
¹ Consists of respondents who wrote in some other race that was not included as an option on the questionnaire.
² Includes related adults who completed a high school diploma or an equivalency credential such as a GED.
 NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population residing within the United States, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This figure includes only children under the age of 18 who live in a household and are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Children married to the householder are excluded. A householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. Related adults include adults who were related to the child and the householder or were themselves the householder. Related adults exclude adults who were related to the child but not to the householder. Educational attainment of the related householder was considered even if the householder was under age 18. Respondents were interviewed throughout the given year and reported the income they received during the previous 12 months. Poverty status is determined by the Census Bureau using a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition. For additional information about poverty status, see <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Figures are plotted based on unrounded data.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data, 2022. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2023*, table 102.62.

In 2022, the poverty rate for children under age 18 related to a householder was highest for those in households in which no related adult had completed high school (49 percent) and lowest for those in households in which the highest level of education attained by any related adult was a bachelor's or higher degree (4 percent). This pattern generally held for all racial/ethnic groups except for Pacific Islander children, where the poverty rate was not measurably different between most levels of educational attainment of related adults.

FIGURE 6.

Among children under age 18 living with a related householder, percentage in families living in poverty, by child's race/ethnicity and living arrangement: 2022



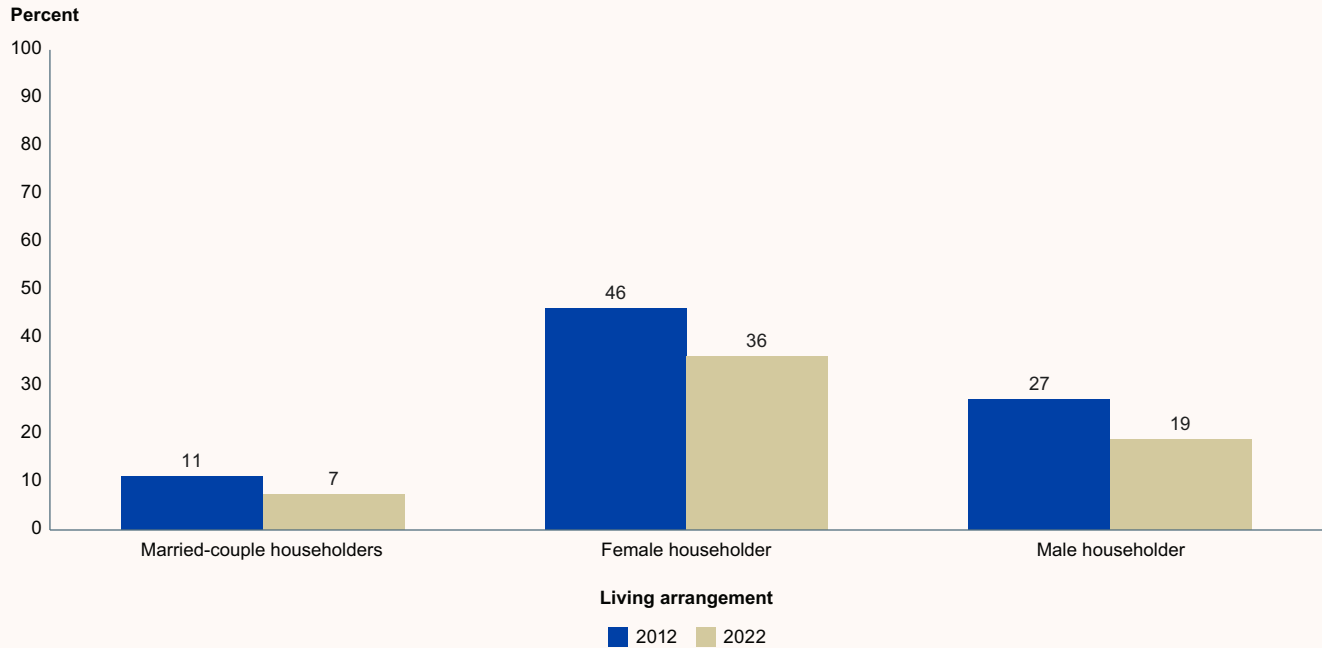
¹ Consists of respondents who wrote in some other race that was not included as an option on the questionnaire.
 NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population residing within the United States, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This figure includes only children under the age of 18 who live in a household and are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Children married to the householder are excluded. Children are classified by the marital status of their parents who are present in the household or, if no parents are present in the household, by the marital status of a householder who is related to the child. Living arrangements with only a "female householder" or "male householder" are those in which the parent or the householder who is related to the child does not have a spouse living in the household. A householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. This figure excludes unrelated children and householders who are themselves under the age of 18. Respondents were interviewed throughout the given year and reported the income they received during the previous 12 months. Poverty status is determined by the Census Bureau using a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition. For additional information about poverty status, see <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Figures are plotted based on unrounded data.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data, 2022. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2023*, table 102.60.

In 2022, the poverty rate for children under age 18 related to a householder was highest for those living with a female householder (36 percent), followed by those living with a male householder (19 percent) and those living in married-couple households (7 percent). This pattern—of children living in married-couple households having the lowest poverty rate and those living with a female householder having the highest poverty rate—was observed for most racial/ethnic groups. The exceptions were

- Asian children and children of Some other race, for whom there was no measurable difference between poverty rates for children living with a female householder and those living with a male householder; and
- Pacific Islander children, for whom the poverty rate was highest for those living with a female householder (32 percent) but lowest for those living with a male householder (8 percent).

FIGURE 7.

Among children under age 18 living with a related householder, percentage in families living in poverty, by living arrangement: 2012 and 2022

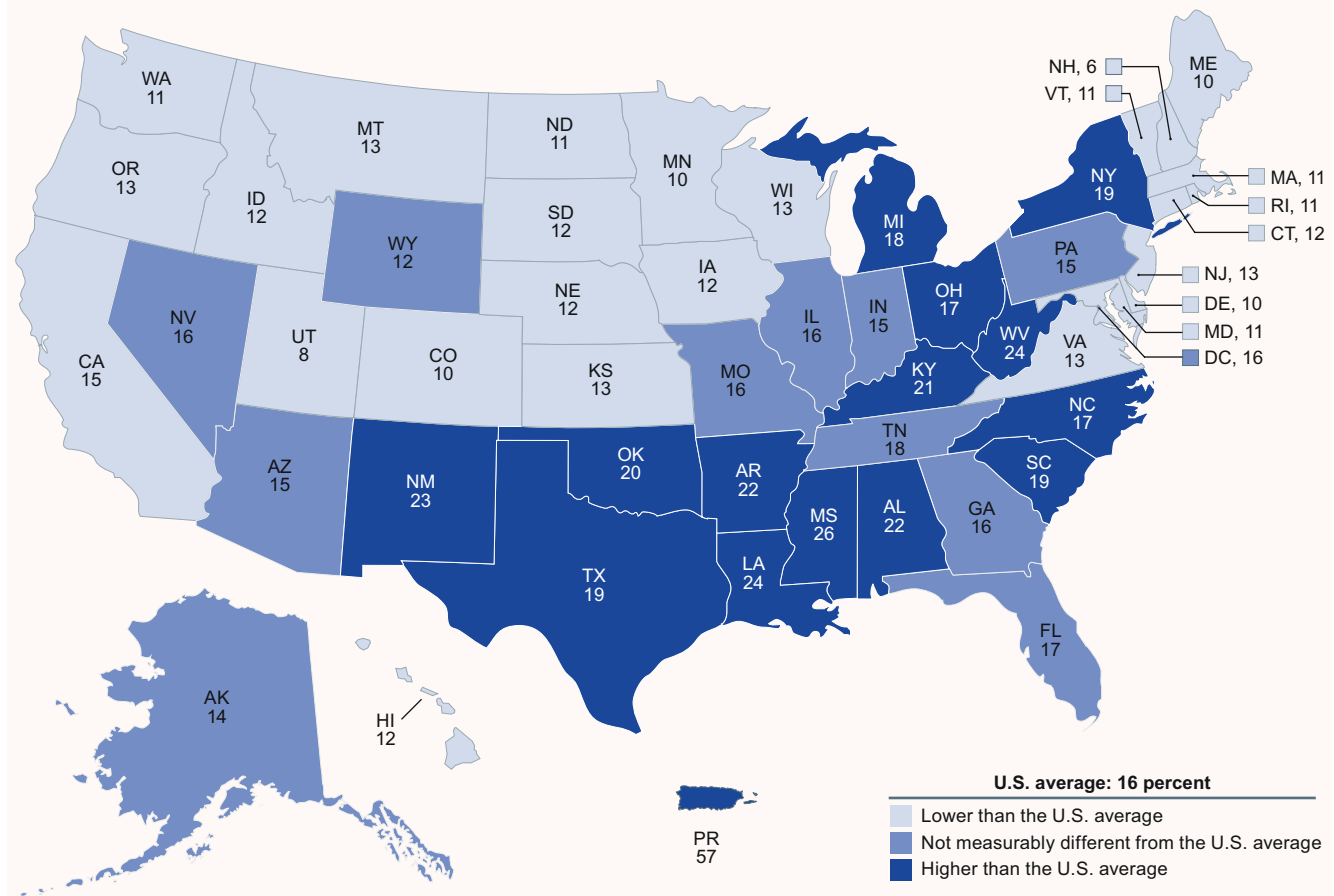


NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population residing within the United States, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This figure includes only children under the age of 18 who live in a household and are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Children married to the householder are excluded. Children are classified by the marital status of their parents who are present in the household or, if no parents are present in the household, by the marital status of the householder who is related to the child. Living arrangements with only a “female householder” or “male householder” are those in which the parent or the householder who is related to the child does not have a spouse living in the household. A householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. This figure excludes unrelated children and householders who are themselves under the age of 18. Respondents were interviewed throughout the given year and reported the income they received during the previous 12 months. Poverty status is determined by the Census Bureau using a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition. For additional information about poverty status, see <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>. Figures are plotted based on unrounded data.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data, 2012 and 2022. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2023*, table 102.60.

The poverty rate was lower in 2022 than in 2012 for children under age 18 living with a female householder (36 vs. 46 percent), a male householder (19 vs. 27 percent), and married-couple householders (7 vs. 11 percent). This pattern of lower child poverty rates in 2022 than in 2012 for all living arrangements was observed for children who were Black, Hispanic, White, and of Two or more races. For American Indian/Alaska Native children, the poverty rate was lower in 2022 than in 2012 for those living with married-couple householders or with male householders. For Asian children, the poverty rate was lower in 2022 than in 2012 for those living with married-couple householders or with female householders. For Pacific Islander children, the poverty rate was lower for those living with male householders, only.

FIGURE 8.

Among children under age 18 living with a related householder, percentage in families living in poverty, by state or jurisdiction: 2022



NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population residing within the United States, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This figure includes only children under the age of 18 who live in a household and are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Children married to the householder are excluded. A householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. This figure excludes unrelated children and householders who are themselves under the age of 18. The U.S. average represents the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Respondents were interviewed throughout the given year and reported the income they received during the previous 12 months. Poverty status is determined by the Census Bureau using a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition. For additional information about poverty status, see <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>. Based on income and family size data from the American Community Survey (ACS). Figures are plotted based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data, 2022. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2023*, table 102.40.

Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, the poverty rate for children under age 18 related to a householder in 2022 ranged from 6 percent in New Hampshire to 26 percent in Mississippi. Twenty-five states had child poverty rates that were lower than the U.S. average¹² of 16 percent, 14 states had rates that were higher than the U.S. average, and 11 states and the District of Columbia had rates that were not measurably different from the U.S. average. Of the 14 states that had poverty rates that were higher than the U.S. average, the majority (10) were located in the South. In Puerto Rico, the child poverty rate (57 percent) was higher than the rate in any of the 50 states or the District of Columbia.

In 46 states and the District of Columbia, the poverty rates were lower in 2022 than in 2012. In the remaining 4 states (Alaska, North Dakota, Vermont, and West Virginia) and Puerto Rico, there was no measurable difference between the poverty rates in 2022 and 2012.

Endnotes:

¹ For general technical notes related to data analysis, data interpretation, rounding, and other considerations, please refer to the [Reader's Guide](#).

² Pungello, E.P., Kainz, K., Burchinal, M., Wasik, B.H., Sparling, J.J., Ramey, C.T., and Campbell, F.A. (2010, February). Early Educational Intervention, Early Cumulative Risk, and the Early Home Environment as Predictors of Young Adult Outcomes Within a High-Risk Sample. *Child Development*, 81(1): 410-426. Retrieved December 30, 2022, from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2009.01403.x/full>.

³ Ross, T., Kena, G., Rathbun, A., KewalRamani, A., Zhang, J., Kristapovich, P., and Manning, E. (2012). *Higher Education: Gaps in Access and Persistence Study* (NCES 2012-046). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved December 30, 2022, from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2012046>.

⁴ A householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit.

⁵ Related adults include adults who were related to the child and the householder or were themselves the householder. Data only identify relationships for those related to the householder. Therefore, adults who were related to the child but not to the householder are excluded. Educational attainment of the related householder was considered even if the householder was under age 18.

⁶ Includes related adults who attained professional degrees.

⁷ Includes related adults who completed a high school diploma or an equivalency credential such as a GED.

⁸ The percentage was lower for White children than for all racial/ethnic groups except Pacific Islander children, for whom the rate was not measurably different from that of White children.

⁹ Children are classified by the marital status of their parents who are present in the household or, if no parents are present in the household, by the marital status of the householder who is related to the children. Living arrangements with only a “female householder” or “male householder” are those in which the parent or the householder who is related to the child does not have a spouse living in the household. Foster children, children in unrelated subfamilies, children living in group quarters, and children who were reported as the householder or spouse of the householder are not included in this analysis. These children accounted for 2 percent of all children under age 18.

¹⁰ Includes only children who are related to the householder. Children are considered to be in poverty if their family income falls below the Census Bureau's poverty threshold, which is a dollar amount that varies depending on a family's size and composition and is updated annually to account for inflation. For example, the poverty threshold for a family of four with two children was \$29,678 in 2022. Respondents were interviewed throughout the year and reported on the income they received during the previous 12 months. Poverty status cannot be determined for unrelated children (e.g., foster children) because their family income is not known.

¹¹ Consists of respondents who wrote in some other race that was not included as an option on the questionnaire.

¹² The U.S. average represents the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2023*, tables [102.20](#), [102.40](#), [102.60](#), [102.62](#), and [104.70](#)

Related indicators and resources: [Children Living in Poverty \[Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups\]](#); [Children's Living Arrangements \[Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups\]](#); [Concentration of Public School Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch](#); [Disparities in Educational Outcomes Among Male Youth \[The Condition of Education 2015 Spotlight\]](#); [Education Demographic and Geographic Estimates \(EDGE\)](#); [Risk Factors and Academic Outcomes in Kindergarten Through Third Grade \[The Condition of Education 2017 Spotlight\]](#); [Snapshot: Children Living in Poverty for Racial/Ethnic Subgroups \[Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups\]](#); [Young Adult Educational and Employment Outcomes by Family Socioeconomic Status \[The Condition of Education 2019 Spotlight\]](#)

Glossary: [Associate's degree](#); [Bachelor's degree](#); [College](#); [Doctor's degree](#); [Geographic region](#); [High school completer](#); [Household](#); [Master's degree](#); [Poverty \(official measure\)](#); [Racial/ethnic group](#)