Key Findings

In 2010, in the 100 largest metro areas:

- Married couples with children comprised less than a quarter of all households, and only about a third of households contained children at all.
- Close to half of households with children were headed by a racial/ethnic minority (47%, up from 40% in 2000).
- Over one in five households with children were headed by a Latino (22%, up from 17% in 2000).
- Latinos were the only group in which the majority of households (54%) were raising children. In contrast only 28% of non-Latino white households were raising children.
- Strikingly, the share of households with children headed by a minority increased in all large metros (except for two where shares remained unchanged), and 15 metros saw increases of 10 percentage points or more.
- Metros with the largest increases in the share of households with children headed by a minority were in the West and South, led by Cape Coral, FL, Las Vegas, NV, Stockton, CA, Orlando, FL, Lakeland, FL, Modesto, CA, and Bakersfield, CA.

The longstanding, prevailing image of the typical American household as a married couple with children is in serious need of updating. As of 2010, in the nation’s 100 largest metropolitan areas, less than a quarter (23%) of households fit that description, and only about a third (34%) contained children\(^1\) at all. The aging of the baby boom generation out of prime child-rearing years and overall fertility rates that have changed little over the last two decades have led to a decline in the share of households that include children. At the same time, increasing shares of those households that do include children are headed by a racial or ethnic minority\(^2\). This change is due to minorities' faster population and household growth, their younger age structure, and higher fertility rates of Latinos\(^3\) relative to whites. By 2010, close to half (47%) of households with children in the 100 largest metro areas were headed by a minority, up from 40% in 2000. As households with children become a smaller share of all households and increasingly minority, it is important not to lose sight of the critical role that these households play in shaping our future workforce, voters and leaders, and to strive to provide them with the opportunities they need to reach their full potential.

Married Couples with Children a Declining Share of All Households

Between 2000 and 2010, the number of total households in the 100 largest metro areas grew by about 11%, but the number of households headed by married couples with children remained virtually unchanged (Table 1). As a result, the share of households that were headed by married couples with children fell from 25% to 23% of all households.

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1 For the purpose of this brief, “children” refer to children under age 18 who are related to the household head through birth, marriage or adoption and living at home. Data is drawn from the 2000 and 2010 Decennial Censuses, Summary File 1.

2 Minorities refer to all people except non-Latino whites. “Whites” refer to non-Latino whites. Other racial groups include Latino and non-Latino members.

The number of “other” family households with children (those not headed by a married couple) did grow over the decade, but the overall growth rate of all households with children was still just 5%, compared to a growth rate of 15% experienced by households without children. Therefore, the share of all households that included children declined from 36% to 34%. By 2010, both married couples without children and single person households were more common than married couples with children. Single person households constitute the most numerous household type, and the number of these households grew substantially over the decade.

### Table 1

**Household Composition of 100 Largest Metro Areas: 2000–2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Households (1,000s)</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
<th>Share of Households (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Couple With Children</td>
<td>16,892</td>
<td>16,913</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Couple / No Children</td>
<td>17,093</td>
<td>18,925</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Family With Children</td>
<td>7,439</td>
<td>8,625</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Family / No Children</td>
<td>4,118</td>
<td>5,377</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Person</td>
<td>17,500</td>
<td>19,964</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Non-Family</td>
<td>4,385</td>
<td>5,316</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67,428</td>
<td>75,120</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Family households are those with at least one person related to the household head. “Other family” households are all family households except those headed by a married couple. “Other non-family households” are all non-family households except those headed by a single person. Children refer to those people under age 18, related to the head through birth, marriage, or adoption, and living at home.


### In Large Metros, Almost Half of Households with Children Are Headed by a Minority

By 2010, close to half (47%) of households with children in the 100 largest metro areas were headed by a minority, up from 40% in 2000 (Table 2). Over one in five (22%) households with children was headed by a Latino, up from 17% in 2000. These changes were due to the fast growth of Latino and Asian populations, fueled by both immigration and natural increase. Furthermore, because of their younger age distribution and the higher fertility rates of Latinos relative to whites, minority households are more likely to include children. Minorities are also a growing share of households headed by married couples with children, increasing from 34% of these households in 2000 to 40% in 2010. Indeed, by 2010, over a fifth (21%) of married couple households with children was headed by a Latino.

### Latinos are Only Group in Which Majority of Households Are Raising Children

The greater likelihood that minority households include children is illustrated in Figure 1, which shows the distribution of household types for major racial/ethnic groups in 2010. Only 21% of white-headed households were married couples with children (as indicated by the lowest segment of the first bar), and only 28% contained children at all (as indicated by the combined two lowest segments of the first bar.) In contrast, 34% of Latino-headed households were married couples with children, and 54% included children. Latinos are the only group in which more than half of households are raising children.
Table 2
(100 Largest Metro Areas)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specified Racial/Ethnic Group’s Percent of:</th>
<th>All Households with Children (%)</th>
<th>Married Couple Households with Children (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Minority</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: “All Minority” group includes racial groups not shown separately. Whites include only non-Latino whites. Black and Asian groups include both Latino and non-Latino members. Latinos may be of any race.

Figure 1
Distribution of Households by Household Type: 2010

Source: Diversitydata.org analysis of 2010 Census, Summary File 1.
Even as minorities make up a larger share of all households with children, they are also experiencing a decline in the share of their own households that include children. Over the last decade, all major racial/ethnic groups experienced a decline in the share of households that contained children. For whites, the share fell from 31% to 28%; for blacks, from 45% to 40%; for Latinos, from 57% to 54%; and for, Asians from 43% to 41%. For most groups, this decline was entirely due to a decreasing share of married couples with children. However, for blacks, the share of “other” family households with children (not headed by a married couple) also declined, from 27% to 25%.

In Over a Quarter of Large Metro Areas, At Least Half of Households with Children Are Headed by a Minority

In 28 of the 100 largest metros, half or more of households with children were headed by a minority in 2010, up from 18 metros in 2000. These “majority minority household” metros were located primarily in the Southern and Western regions of the country, along with metro New York in the Northeast (see Figure 2). While the share of households with children headed by a minority is considerably lower in many metros in the nation’s interior, the share is at least ten percent of households in every large metro area.

Figure 2
Percent of Households with Children Headed by a Minority: 2010
(100 Largest Metropolitan Areas)

Source: Diversitydata.org analysis of 2010 Census, Summary File 1.
The increasing share of households with children headed by a minority in large metros can be seen more clearly in Figure 3, which shows the share in 2000 along the horizontal axis and the share in 2010 along the vertical axis. Each metro area is represented by a circle, with the size of the circle reflecting the metro area’s total 2010 population and the color reflecting the metro’s geographic region. Circles lying above the diagonal line represent metros which experienced increases in the share of households with children headed by a minority over the decade. The vertical distance from the circles to the diagonal line represents the magnitude of the change in share, measured in percentage points.

In almost all large metro areas, the share of households with children headed by a minority increased between 2000 and 2010. Only Charlestown, SC and New Orleans, LA are located right on the diagonal line, showing essentially no change in minority share over the decade. The largest percentage point increases in share of households with children headed by a minority occurred in the West and South (light green and orange circles). Fifteen metros experienced increases of ten percentage points or more. Most (12) of these metros were located in the West and South, with six in California alone. Metros with the largest increases in share of households with children headed by a minority include: Cape Coral, FL, Las Vegas, NV, Stockton, CA, Orlando, FL, Lakeland, FL, Modesto, CA, and Bakersfield, CA.
Discussion

The changing face of the American household has potentially broad-reaching political, economic and social implications. Households with children have a wide range of specialized needs, primarily related to education and childcare, but also including certain types of healthcare, recreational amenities, and other facilities and services. The declining share of households with children and the increase in households with children headed by a racial/ethnic minority could reduce the level of political and financial support for policies and programs designed to meet these needs. For example, if people value and are willing to pay for policies that benefit their own households more than those that benefit others, the declining share of households with children may lead to diminishing support for child-related programs and policies. Furthermore, white-headed households (which tend to be older and more likely to vote), may be less likely to support policies that benefit institutions, such as public education, that increasingly serve children in minority families. On the other hand, in some cases, as when the value of a good school district is capitalized into home values or when greater education leads to decreased crime, programs which benefit children bring wider benefits to childless households as well. Therefore, advancing policies that have collective benefits may be an increasingly useful strategy for ensuring supports for households with children. Understanding the extent to which the changing characteristics of households will affect political and financial support for policies and programs will be important for developing sustainable strategies for maintaining and/or increasing supports for households with children. It is crucial that we recognize and support children as our future workers, voters, and leaders. Their welfare, beginning at the earliest ages, is critical to the future of us all.

To investigate household composition or a multitude of other opportunity indicators for your metro area or any metro area, visit www.diversitydata.org