



Hawai'i Family Touchstones

Families are the cornerstone of our society. They are where we nurture and promote the healthy development of children, impart values and skills, and foster the well-being of all family members for a better society. The Center on the Family developed Hawai'i Family Touchstones to monitor the well-being of families in our state. Relevant and measurable indicators are tracked over time to provide an overview of Hawai'i's families. Data are gathered from a variety of public and private sources, and from periodic surveys on a representative sample of Hawai'i's families to provide data unavailable from other sources. Indicators of family well-being are updated frequently and trend data posted on the Center on the Family's Web-based Data Center: http://www.uhfamily.hawaii.edu/Cof_Data/datacenter.asp.

This publication presents data on (1) family composition, (2) family interactions and relationships that promote and build strong families, and (3) connections to communities for family well-being. The data presented in this publication were gathered from two sources: (1) the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey; and (2) a telephone survey commissioned by the Center on the Family, which was conducted between 2005 and 2006 with a statewide representative sample of 2,050 families with children under 18 years.

Family Composition

Using recently published data from the American Community Survey, the following portrait of Hawai'i's families emerges.

- Hawai'i has a higher percentage than the nation of households that are family households[†] (69.6% vs. 66.6%). Of the estimated 303,765 families in our state, 58.9% are families that do not have their own minor children living at home. The proportion of families with their *own children*[‡] under 18 years of age is slightly lower in Hawai'i compared with the entire nation (41.1% vs. 46.6%), with Kaua'i County appearing more similar to the U.S.
- Nearly three quarters (73.6%) of families with minor children in Hawai'i are maintained by married couples, slightly

[†] A group of two or more people who reside together and who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

[‡] *Own children* are biological, step-, or adopted children of the householder or family reference person.



higher than the 68.9% nationwide, while nearly a fifth (19.4%) are headed by a woman without a spouse present, compared with 23.8% nationwide. The proportion of families with children that are maintained by men without a spouse in Hawai‘i is similar to the U.S. (7.0% vs. 7.3%). Hawai‘i and Kaua‘i counties have the highest proportion of one-parent householders (34.1% and 31.7% respectively).

- Nearly a quarter of families with children in Hawai‘i have young children under age six only, similar to the nation as a whole (23.8% vs. 22.6%). Hawai‘i County has the smallest proportion of families with only young children (18.2%). Well over half of families with children have older children only (i.e., 6 through 17 years of age), similar to the rest of the country (56.2% vs. 57.3%), with Hawai‘i County having the greatest proportion of families with children in this age group (62.9%).
- The percentage of families with five or more people in the household is higher in Hawai‘i than in the country as a whole (20.6% vs. 14.6%),

while the percentage of families with less than three people in the household is lower (37.7% vs. 42.6%). The average family size in Hawai‘i is 3.4, slightly higher than the nation’s average, 3.2. Hawai‘i County has the lowest average family size, 3.1 individuals.

- Hawai‘i leads the nation with the highest percentage of multigenerational households (households with more than two generations). This is not surprising given the high cost of living in the state and strong cultural values that place an emphasis on supporting the ‘ohana, which often result in extended family members sharing living quarters. Multigenerational households account for 7.4% of all households in Hawai‘i, compared with 3.4% nationwide. Finally, contrary to a trend in the U.S., a much smaller proportion of Hawai‘i’s grandparents are responsible for their grandchildren’s care (e.g., providing for food, shelter, clothing, and day care). Nationally, 40.6% of grandparents living with their grandchildren are responsible for their care, compared with 25% of such grandparents in Hawai‘i.

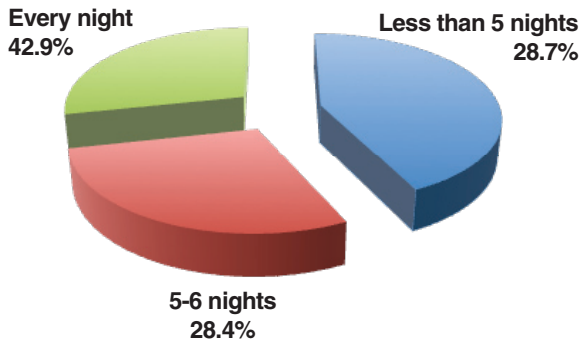
INDICATORS	US	State	COUNTIES			
			C&C Honolulu	Hawai‘i	Kaua‘i	Maui
Percentage of households that are family households ¹	66.6	69.6	70.3	68.5	71.1	66.4
Percentage of families with no children under age 18 ¹	53.4	58.9	59.2	60.7	54.7	56.6
Percentage of families with own children under age 18 ¹	46.6	41.1	40.8	39.3	45.3	43.4
• that are married couple families ¹	68.9	73.6	75.9	65.8	68.3	72.0
• headed by female householder without a husband present ¹	23.8	19.4	18.1	24.9	21.4	19.6
• headed by male householder without a wife present ¹	7.3	7.0	6.0	9.2	10.3	8.3
• with children under 6 years of age only ²	22.6	23.8	24.8	18.2	22.4	25.6
• with children 6 to 17 years of age only ²	57.3	56.2	54.5	62.9	59.4	56.5
• with children under 6 and from 6 to 17 years of age ²	20.1	20.0	20.7	18.9	18.1	17.9
Percentage of families with only two people in the household ³	42.6	37.7	36.7	41.8	39.0	38.2
Percentage of families with three to four people in the household ³	42.8	41.7	42.1	39.9	41.3	41.8
Percentage of families with five or more people in the household ³	14.6	20.6	21.2	18.4	19.7	19.9
Average family size ¹	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.1	3.3	3.5
Percentage of households that are multigenerational ⁴	3.4	7.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of grandparents living with own grandchildren who are responsible for their grandchildren ¹	40.6	25.0	22.3	37.9	33.8	27.6

Family Interactions and Relationships

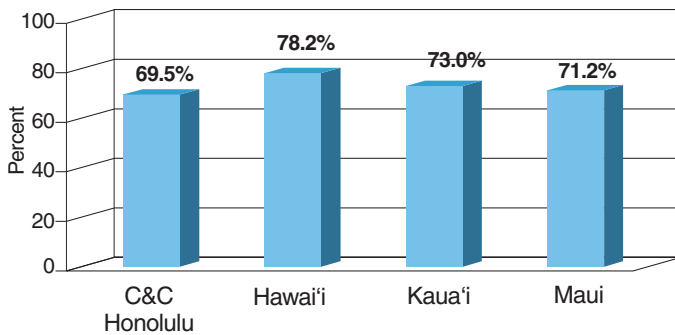
The most recent Hawai‘i Family Touchstones survey, conducted among families with children under 18 years of age, measured indicators of family interactions and relationships that promote family strength and well-being.

- Seventy-one percent (71.3%) of Hawai‘i’s families eat dinner together on a regular basis (at least five times per week), with the proportion of families eating dinner together regularly being highest in Hawai‘i County (78.2%). Eating dinner together on a regular basis provides time for family communication and opportunities to spend quality time together. Maintaining such a routine is associated with positive outcomes for children and youth, such as high academic achievement and reduced risk for substance use and delinquent behavior.

Percentage of Families Eating Together Regularly⁵



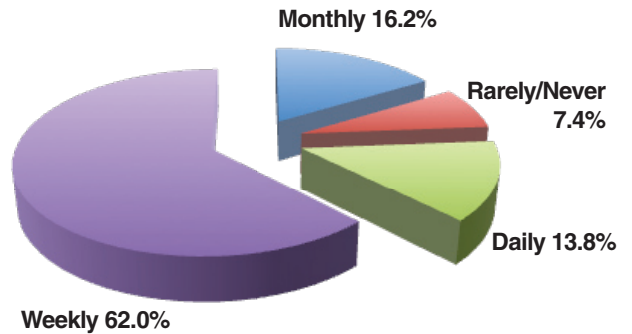
Percentage of Families Eating Together Regularly—County Data⁵



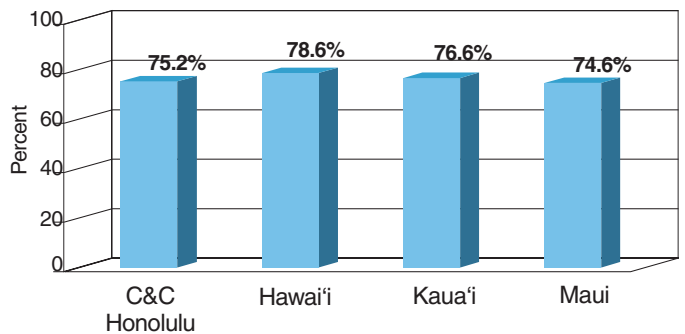
A parent from each sampled family was asked: “How many nights a week out of seven days does your family eat together?” Responses of “5 to 6 nights” a week and “every night” indicated that families eat together regularly.

- Over three-quarters (75.8%) of Hawai‘i’s families regularly spend time together doing fun things, with Hawai‘i County having a higher percentage of families that spend recreational time together. Making time for recreational activities together provides opportunities for learning and communication, strengthens family ties, and promotes a sense of stability and harmony.

Percentage of Families Regularly Spending Time Together⁵



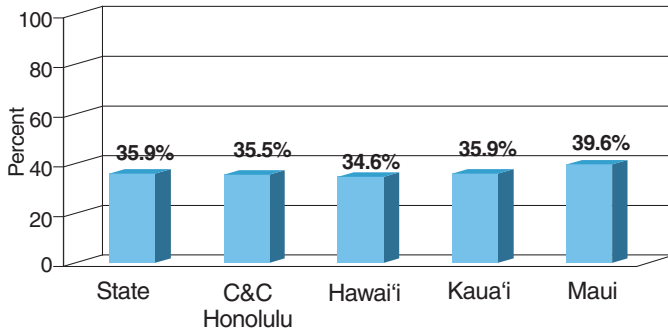
Percentage of Families Regularly Spending Time Together—County Data⁵



A parent from each sampled family was asked: “How often does your family do fun things together, like recreational activities, sports, going to the movies, or going to cultural events?” “Weekly” and “daily” responses indicated families regularly spending time together doing fun things.

- More than a third (35.9%) of Hawai‘i’s families regularly attend religious services, with Maui County having the highest percentage of families who regularly attend (39.6%). Research indicates that one of the qualities shared by strong families is a sense of a greater good or power in life, a spirituality or set of values and beliefs that gives strength, perspective, and guidelines for living.

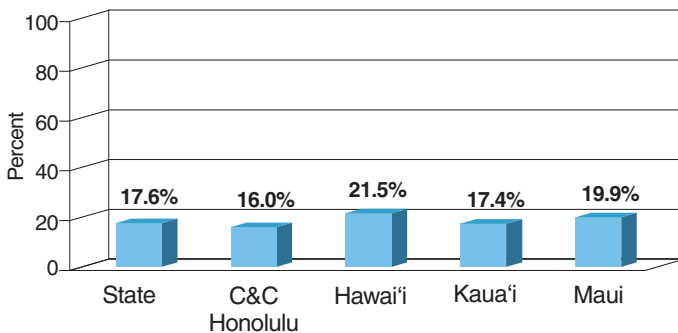
Percentage of Parents Regularly Attending Religious Services⁵



A parent from each sampled family was asked: “How often do you attend religious services?” “Regular” attendance at religious services is defined here as weekly attendance.

- Nearly 18% of Hawai‘i’s families engage in cultural practices on a regular basis, with Hawai‘i County having the highest proportion of families who do so, at 21.5%. Maintaining cultural traditions makes family members aware of their shared history and values, and a clear and positive ethnic and cultural identity is important for healthy self-esteem.

Percentage of Families Regularly Engaging in Cultural Practices⁵

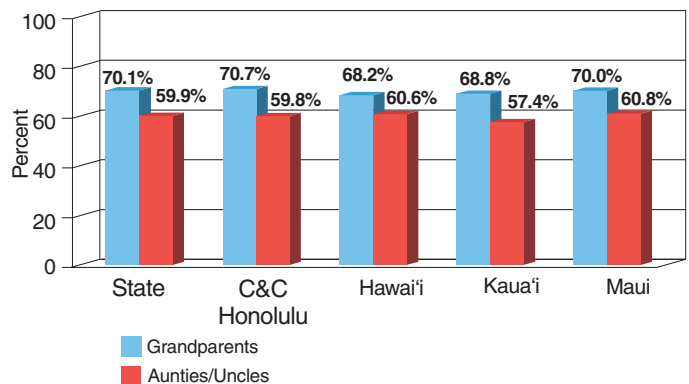


A parent from each sampled family was asked: “How often does your family engage in cultural practices or activities of your family’s heritage?” “Daily” and “weekly” responses indicated families regularly engaging in cultural practices.



- Seventy percent (70.1%) of those surveyed indicated that their children are in regular contact with grandparents and nearly 60% in regular contact with aunts and uncles. Research indicates that families that are not isolated from others and that can, for example, depend on extended relatives in time of need, often manage stress better and do well during a crisis.

Percentage of Families with Children in Regular Contact with Extended Family⁵



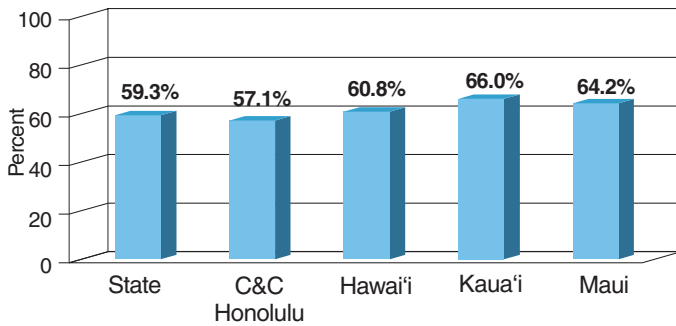
A parent from each sampled family was asked: “How many times per week do your children see or talk to grandparents/aunties and uncles?” “Regular contact” indicates contact at least once per week.

Connections To Communities

The Hawai‘i Family Touchstones survey also provides a picture of Hawai‘i’s families in their communities— what families offer to their communities, and what the communities offer them for sustained well-being.

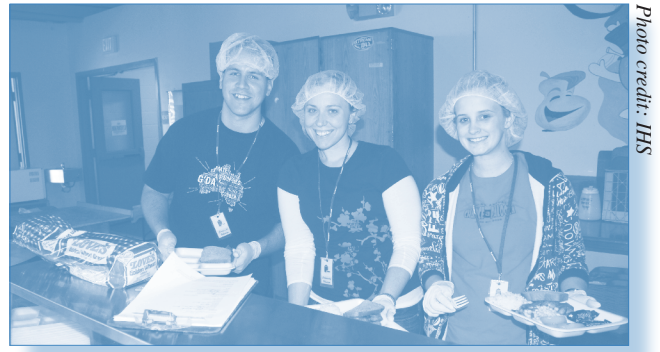
- Well over half (59.3%) of parents indicated that they volunteer at a church, for a charity, or for a community group, with Kaua‘i County having the highest proportion of parents who volunteer (66%). Volunteer activities provide opportunities for families to engage with others in the community and to build social networks and social trust. Volunteering can also raise resources and services where they may be lacking and enrich the lives of families and community members.

Percentage of Parents Who Volunteer⁵

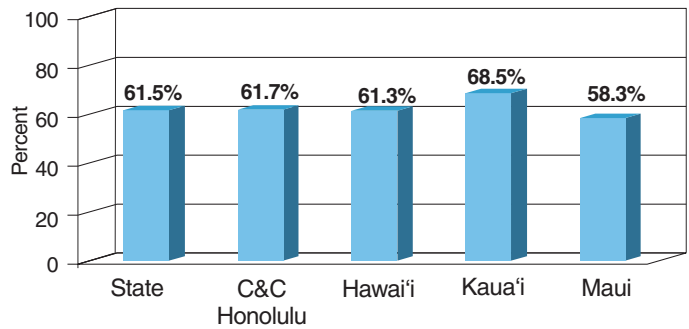


A parent from each sampled family was asked: “In the past year, have you done any volunteer work for any church, charity, or community group?” A “yes” indicated volunteerism.

- Sixty-one percent (61.5%) of Hawai‘i’s families participate in community activities, such as neighborhood celebrations, with Kaua‘i County having the largest percentage (68.5%) of families that engage in community activities. Participation in community events generates commitment and care for the communities in which families live, and provides opportunities for families to expand their networks, strengthen bonds, and build trust among neighbors.



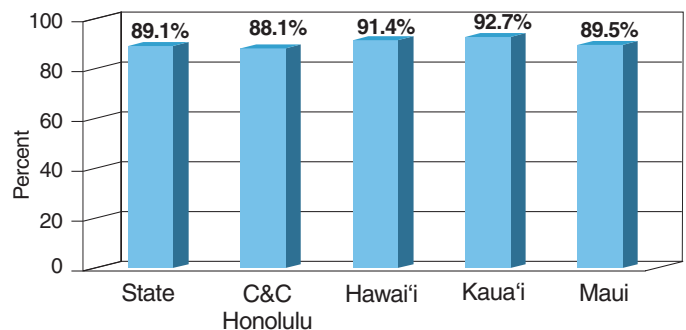
Percentage of Families Who Participate in Community Activities⁵



A parent from each sampled family was asked: “Do you attend neighborhood celebrations, like block parties, and cultural events in your community?” A “yes” indicated attendance.

- Eighty-nine percent (89.1%) of Hawai‘i’s families indicated that they can rely on another person in their community, outside of the family, for help in time of need, with Kaua‘i County having the largest percentage of families who feel they can rely on others (92.7%). Turning to neighbors reflects a sense of social connectedness, security, and trust, and contributes to the health of a community.

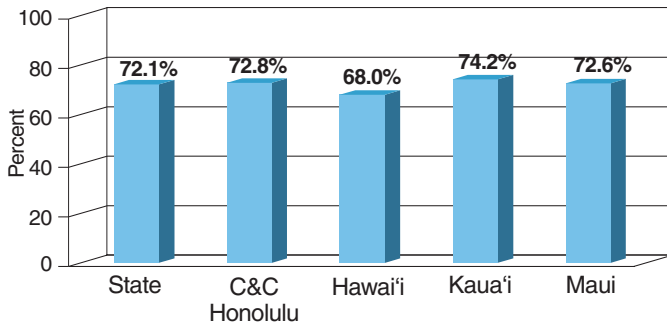
Percentage of Families Who Can Rely on Others in the Community⁵



A parent from each sampled family was asked: “Is there someone in your community, outside of your family, that you feel you can rely on in time of need?” A “yes” indicated perception of community support.

- Seventy-two percent (72.1%) of Hawai‘i’s families feel safe in their communities, with Kaua‘i County having the highest percentage of families who feel safe (74.2%). The perception of a safe neighborhood affects a family’s daily behavior—it determines whether children play outdoors, and the nature of families’ activities and interactions near their home.

Percentage of Families Who Feel Safe in their Neighborhood⁵



A parent from each sampled family was asked: “Is there any area near where you live—that is, within a mile—where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?” A “no” response indicated perception of safety.



Summary

Hawai‘i has a slightly higher proportion of households that are family households compared to the nation. Households are also slightly larger in the “aloha” state and Hawai‘i has the highest proportion of multigenerational households in the nation. Over 70% of Hawai‘i’s families practice behaviors that strengthen family bonds and promote well-being, such as eating dinner together and doing fun things together on a regular basis. Hawai‘i’s families are also engaged in their communities, with about 60% of parents volunteering in their communities and over 60% of families participating in community activities. Most feel they can rely on their neighbors in time of need, and the good majority feel safe in their communities.

Indicator Data Sources

- U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Selected Social Characteristics in the United States: 2006-2008
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table S1101, Households and Families
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table B11016, Household Type by Household Size
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey, Table B11017, Multigenerational Households
- Center on the Family. *Family Touchstones Survey*, 2006 [Data file].

Suggested Citations

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