

# ALL IN THE FAMILY

Asian American families by the numbers.  
Writer **Lisa Wong Macabasco** Illustrator **Kaitlin Choi**

## Babies

**Asian American women have a low rate of unmarried births:** About 9 percent of Asian American mothers who gave birth in 2004 were unmarried, compared with 28 percent of all American women. (Source: US Census Bureau, 2004 American Community Survey, Selected Population Profiles, S0201.)



Among Asian American ethnic groups, **Indian and Vietnamese American women had the highest fertility rates**, with 74 and 72 of every 1,000 having given birth, respectively. In 2004 (the fertility rate for all American women was about 55 of every 1,000 women). (Source: US Census Bureau, 2004 American Community Survey, Selected Population Profiles, S0201.)



A 2008 Columbia University study found that when a third child is born following two daughters, **the child is 50 percent more likely to be a son if the parents are Chinese, Korean or Indian American**. The researchers call this “evidence of sex selection, most likely at the prenatal stage.” (Source: “Choosing to eliminate unwanted daughters,” *The Boston Globe*, April 6, 2008, Lexis; “Male Birth Rate Among Asian Americans Studied,” *National Public Radio* (NPR), April 1, 2008.)

## Immigration

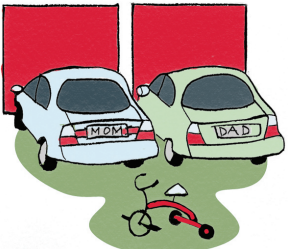
Although many foreign-born Asian Americans arrive in the United States through the employment-based immigration system or as refugees and asylees, **the majority come through the family-based immigration system**. In 2005, 56 percent of immigrants from Asia came to the United States via family immigration. (Source: Statement of Karen K. Narasaki, president and executive director of Asian American Justice Center, Committee on House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law, May 22, 2007.)



However, **Asian countries suffer some of the world's worst immigration backlogs**. In the family immigration system, a US-citizen parent petitioning for an unmarried adult daughter from China must wait about six years before she can immigrate to the United States. A US citizen petitioning for a sibling from India must wait 11 years; for a sibling from the Philippines, the wait is 23 years. (Source: Statement of Karen K. Narasaki, president and executive director of Asian American Justice Center, Committee on House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law, May 22, 2007.)

## Households

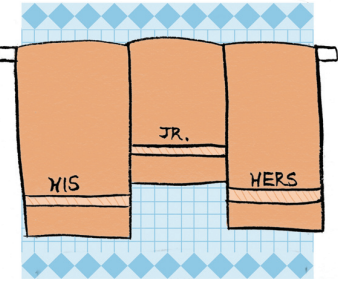
**Asian Americans are more likely than the total population to be in married-couple families.** In 2000, over 60 percent of Asian American households were maintained by married couples, compared with 53 percent of households overall. More than 70 percent of Indian, Hmong and Pakistani households in the United States were married-couple families. (Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.)



In 2004, **married-couple family households were the predominant household type among Asian Americans — except Japanese Americans**. Of all Asian ethnic groups, Japanese Americans had the lowest percentage (46) of married-couple households and the highest percentage (44) of nonfamily households; they also had the smallest average household size: 2.2 persons. (Source: US Census Bureau, 2004 American Community Survey, Selected Population Profiles, S0201, and Detailed Tables, B11001.)

Among Asian ethnic groups, **Indian and Pakistani Americans had the lowest proportions of female-householder families with no husband present** (3.8 and 3.6 percent, respectively) and Cambodian Americans had the highest (21 percent). (Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.)

**Laotian and Vietnamese Americans had the highest percentages of male-headed family households with no wives present**, with 9.8 and 8 percent, respectively (the national average is 4.1 percent). (Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.)



Last year, **85 percent of Asian American children lived with two parents**, compared with 78 percent

of white, non-Hispanic children; 70 percent of Hispanic children and 38 percent of black children in the United States. (Source: US Census, America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2008.)

Also as of last year, 14 percent of **both Asian and black children lived in a household with a grandparent present**, compared with 6 percent of white, non-Hispanic children and 10 percent of Hispanic children. (Source: US Census, America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2008.)

The average US household size is 2.6; the **average for Asian American households is 2.97**. (Source: US Census Bureau, 2004 American Community Survey, Selected Population Profiles, S0201, and Detailed Tables, B11001.)

Average household size:	
Vietnamese	3.24
Filipino	3.30
Asian Indian	3.00
Chinese	2.87
Korean	2.64
Japanese	2.21

(Source: US Census Bureau, 2004 American Community Survey, Selected Population Profiles, S0201, and Detailed Tables, B11001.)

## Quality Time

In 2004, **Asian American children younger than 12 were more likely to eat breakfast with a parent every day** than children their age of any other race or ethnicity. (Source: US Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel, Wave 8.)



**Asian American children older than 12 were less likely than other children their age to be praised by a parent three times per day**. This group was also least likely to participate in extracurricular sports and least likely to have a family television rule instituted. (Source: US Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel, Wave 8.)

**Asian American children aged 6 to 11 participated in extracurricular lessons at a rate of almost 43 percent** — versus 34 percent for whites, 25 for blacks and 22 for Hispanics. (Source: US Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel, Wave 8.)



Asian American children under 12 were more likely than children their age of other races/ethnicities to have **had fewer than seven outings, or no outings at all, with a parent in the past month**. (Source: US Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel, Wave 8.)

## Conflict

**Asian American adolescents with divorced or separated parents seem most affected by a shortage of family social resources** — meaning they miss things like talking to and spending time with parents. Black teens, on the other hand, are most harmed by shortages of economic resources, while white teens were equally harmed by shortages in both types of resources. (Source: *Mental Health Weekly Digest*, Oct. 1, 2007.)



Family conflict is a significant predictor of suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts among Asian Americans — independently of depression, low income or gender. In fact, as of last year, **the risk of suicide among Asian Americans with family problems was triple that of other Asian Americans, even controlling for depression**. (Source: *Time* magazine, Aug. 19, 2008.)



A 2007 study showed that, among teens of all races/ethnicities, **Asian American and white teens face the most serious problems due to parental divorce or separation**. Researchers speculate that because these groups are most advantaged in terms of well being and resources, they have the furthest to fall. (Source: *Mental Health Weekly Digest*, Oct. 1, 2007)

## Income

Median incomes were substantially lower for Cambodian, Hmong, Korean, Laotian, Pakistani, Thai and Vietnamese American families than for all Asian families in the United States. **Median incomes of Hmong and Cambodian families were the lowest of all Asian groups** (\$32,400 and \$35,600, respectively). (Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.)



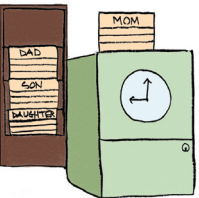
The **median family income for Asian American families is \$15,600 higher than the national median family income**, according to 2007 census data. (Source: Asian American/Pacific Islander Profile. Office of Minority Health.)

In 2000, **Indian and Japanese families' median incomes were more than \$10,000 higher than that of all Asian families in the United States**. (Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.)



## Businesses

In 2002, so many Asian American businesses were family-run that about two-thirds had no paid employees. (Source: US Census Bureau, Survey of Business Owners: Asian-Owned Firms: 2002.)



## Influences

Among Japanese and Chinese American women surveyed, two-thirds reported that **their decisions to remain single had been greatly influenced by the fact that their parents' marriages were based on responsibility and obligation instead of love**. (Source: Phyllis A. Gordon, “The Decision to Remain Single: Implications for Women Across Cultures.” *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, Jan. 1, 2003.)

In a 2000 study, unmarried Chinese and Japanese American women cited four factors in their singlehood: the non-centrality of love in their parents' marriage, **their status as elder daughters who had to care for the family**, their educational goals and their belief that there wasn't anyone appropriate to marry. (Source: Phyllis A. Gordon, “The Decision to Remain Single: Implications for Women Across Cultures.” *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, Jan. 1, 2003.)

