

## How many relatives do we have?

**In France, in 1990, an adult has 30 family members on average.**

Counting ascendants (parents, grandparents, great-grandparents), descendants (children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren) and collateral relatives (brothers and sisters), an individual's immediate family circle (including the family-in-law if there is a spouse) includes 15 immediate relatives on average. Adding a similar number of uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces (non-immediate relatives), the average family network totals around 30 people.

Mean number of relatives, in 1990, by age, sex, and conjugal status				
Age (years)	In conjugal union	Man alone	Woman alone	Single-parent family
<b>Immediate relatives</b> Direct ascendants and descendants, brothers and sisters of respondent and his/her spouse				
Under 35	17,7	10,0	8,6	14,4
35 - 49	18,5	11,1	9,0	15,3
50 - 64	18,0	10,5	12,7	15,9
65+	18,5	9,9	14,1	23,7*
<b>Non-immediate relatives</b> Uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, cousins				
Under 35	25,8	21,4	17,5	18,5
35 - 49	25,7	14,2	21,8	20,7
50 - 64	21,8	12,4	15,4	19,0
65+	19,6	16,7	12,5	16,8
<b>All immediate and non-immediate relatives</b>				
Under 35	43,5	31,4	26,1	32,8
35 - 49	44,2	25,3	30,8	35,9
50 - 64	39,8	22,9	28,1	34,9
65+	38,1	26,7	26,6	40,5*
<b>Relatives with whom respondent has close ties</b>				
Under 35	6,3	3,9	3,8	3,3
35 - 49	5,4	3,3	2,7	4,6
50 - 64	5,1	2,8	4,1	4,4
65+	4,9	2,8	3,5	5,2

\* Non significant  
Source : Ined, « Proches & parents », 1990  
Teaching Kit, INED, [www.ined.fr](http://www.ined.fr)

The older we are, the larger the number of relatives we have. As old family members die and new ones are born, grandparents and parents (six people) are replaced by children and grandchildren, generally more numerous.

### Conjugal status affects number of relatives and family relations

Partners in a conjugal union necessarily have a larger family (18 immediate and 23 non-immediate relatives on average) than persons living alone (10 immediate and 16 non-immediate relatives). Couples report being emotionally close to around five people in their family, while singles are close to three.

Affective ties and geographical proximity are often correlated: more than one in four adults in France live in the same municipality as their mother, and one in two in the same département. And among people reporting close ties with relatives, 51% live in the same municipality as one of their family members, or in a neighbouring one.

### To find out more ([www.ined.fr](http://www.ined.fr)) :

The «Proches et parents» survey (Ined) was conducted in 1990 on a sample of 1,947 people representative of the French adult population. Its purpose was to describe immediate and extended family circles and to study family support networks.

### The family game (Animation)

[How often do adult children see their parents?](#) (A. Régnier-Loilier, *Population & Societies*, Ined, 427, 2006)

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