

Grandparents key to China's expansion

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Rural China's elders care for grandchildren after parents migrate to urban centers and now a U.S. study finds that is a key factor in China's expansion.

The University of Southern California study found older parents living in three-generation households or with grandchildren in skipped-generation households in rural China, have a more positive attitude than those living by themselves.

"Rural China is experiencing historically unprecedented migration," said gerontology Professor Merrill Silverstein. "Working-age people get jobs in cities ... (and are paid) three to four times more than what they'd get by working the farms."

China has a population of 1.3 billion people, with approximately 60 percent living in rural areas. An increased population in urban centers helps fuel the nation's rapid economic expansion.

"By leaving their children behind, migrants can concentrate more on their work," said Zhen Cong, co-author of the study. "They do not need to pay their children's daily care and have lower education expenses."

The study appears in the latest issue of the *Journal of Gerontology*.

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