

MARSHALL ISLANDS FAMILY

	Traditional	Contemporary
Who is in the family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended family includes grandparents, parents, children, cousins, aunts, uncles, and others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuclear families are more common than extended families and usually include grandparents, parents, and children
What are the housing provisions within the family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All lived in compound with local provisions Basic human needs: food, water, shelter, and clothing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreign luxury necessities, such as furniture, TV/video, radio, cookware, fishing gear, and fast transportation
What is the order of authority in the family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grandfather was the alap (head of clan) Grandparents were the most powerful in family, then father, uncles, aunts, and eldest son 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grandfather or father is alap Father is the head of the house and has the most power If the father is away, the mother takes over with support of the eldest son
What are the roles, rights, and responsibilities of each family member?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Males looked after the well-being of the family and did most of the heavy work Females looked after children and did housekeeping and cooking Grandparents supervised Children helped parents clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Males look after the well-being of the family Females look after children, do housekeeping, and work at government agencies or in the private sector to contribute to the family's finances Husbands and wives work and may contribute to either's family as part of their wedding day promise Boys clean the yard, take care of the trash, and help their father

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls help with housekeeping, cooking, and taking care of younger children • Children have the right to go to school
What are children's obligations to their family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children were respectful and obedient and did assigned light household chores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should be respectful, obedient, helpful around the house, and educated to get a job to <i>ukot boka</i> (look after/take care of elderly parents)
What are the functions and obligations of the family in the larger social unit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family was responsible for its economic and social needs, maintained relationships, fulfilled obligations to clans, was caring and disciplined, and followed the traditions of <i>kumit</i> (group work): cared for family, worked together, and shared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social units in outer islands stress group work • Everyone contributes to the well-being of the larger social unit through donations (money, food) and gifts for social activities and events, especially weddings, deaths of relatives, and a child's first birthday
What is the importance of individual family members versus the family as a whole?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone learned, by practice or from elders, to help the whole family • Family as a whole was more important • Individual members were valued only as part of the whole family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is responsible for the well-being of the whole family • Increased value is placed on the individual (seen as separate), but the family as a whole is still more important
What is the degree of solidarity or cohesiveness in the family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greatest degree of family cohesion; "what is mine is yours" • All members shared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great degree of family cohesion • Family ties have been lessened because of foreign goods

	<p>their needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The entire family always worked together 	
What kinds of events affect the family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash economy • Foreign influences (traders, missionaries, whalers, Germans, and other Europeans) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash economy • Politics and religion • Gradual changes in cultural values and customs
How do people come to meet and marry?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriages were arranged with parental consent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental consent may or may not be sought
What do parents want for their children?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess knowledge of traditional skills to survive • Stay with parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish school, get a good job, and support parents as they age • Be productive citizens • Children are free to choose where to live outside RMI and to acquire their own houses