



COLORADO

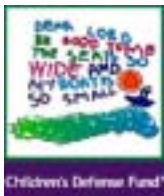
A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

September 2005

The Brookdale Foundation

Across the United States, more than 6 million children are being raised in households headed by grandparents and other relatives; 2.5 million children are in these households without any parents present. As the children's parents struggle with substance abuse, mental illness, incarceration, economic hardship, divorce, domestic violence, and other challenges, these caregivers provide a vital safety net to children inside and outside of the foster care system. This fact sheet provides important information and resources for the grandparents and other relatives raising children in your state.

National and State Data*



The Children

- Nationally, 4.5 million children are living in grandparent-headed households (6.3% of all children under age 18). This represents a 30% increase from 1990 to 2000.
- There are another 1.5 million children in the United States who are living in households headed by other relatives (2.1% of all children under 18).
- In Colorado there are 51,325 children living in grandparent-headed households (4.7% of all children in the state). There are another 19,230 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.7% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Colorado, 28,185 are living there without either parent present.

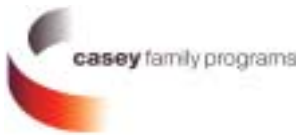
The Grandparents

- Nationally, 2.4 million grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them: 29% of these grandparents are African American; 17% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3% are Asian; and 47% are White. 34% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 71% are under the age of 60; 19% live in poverty.
- In Colorado, 28,524 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [4,710 in Denver]: 7% of these grandparents are African American; 34% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are Asian; 2% are American Indian and Alaskan Native; and 53% are White. 35% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present.

Additional Information

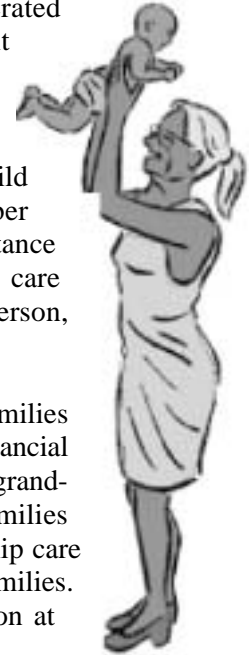
- United States Census data on grandparents who are responsible for meeting the basic needs of their grandchildren can also be broken down by county, congressional district, and other categories. Log on to <http://factfinder.census.gov>. Additional data on grandparents and grandchildren are available at www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/grandparents.html.
- Additional national and state data on grandparents raising children is available on AARP's website at www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/.

* These data are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2. Profile Selected Social Characteristics: 2000.



Programs That Can Help

- **Families First** provides the Family Support Line, available to kinship care families and others seven days a week (from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.). The listening line provides families with information and referrals for parenting classes, support groups, and other agencies working with grandparents and other relatives. The Family Support Line also makes referrals for financial assistance, mental health, legal, educational, and medical support services. *Contact:* Sarah Hite, Coordinator, at (877) 695-7996 (toll-free in Colorado) or (303) 695-7996, log on to www.familiesfirstColorado.org, or email info@familiesfirstcolorado.org.
- **The Colorado Kinship Care Resource Guide** contains useful information for all relative caregivers — those caring for children with or without legal custody and those caring for children in the custody of the Department of Human Services. The guide contains local and statewide information on organizations and programs that serve relative caregivers. Answers to questions on public benefits, legal options, educational access, medical and mental health services, child care, support groups, foster care and adoption, and interacting with incarcerated parents are all provided. To get a copy of the Resource Guide, call 303-866-4207 or visit <http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/cyf/cwelfare/Kinship%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>.
- **Catholic Charities** runs a monthly support group for relative caregivers in the Weld County area, supported through a Safe and Stable Families Grant from the State. The group provides child care during the support group as well as ongoing case management services for a limited number of caregivers. The case management services include home visits, advocacy, referrals, and assistance accessing social and legal services. Information and referrals are also provided for all kinship care families in the areas of housing and other social and legal support services. *Contact:* Cheri Anderson, Supervisor, at (970) 353-6433 or ccncanderson@hotmail.com.
- **El Paso County Kinship Support Services** provide a wide variety of supports to kinship care families inside and outside of the child welfare system. The program provides casework services and financial help in meeting the needs of children, including summer camp, furniture, and moving costs. A “grandparent advocate” works with both relatives receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) payments and those involved in the foster care system. The county also provides kinship care support groups and offers a “warm-line” to provide information and referrals to kinship care families. The county has also recently created a subsidized custody program. *Contact:* Betsy Fredrickson at (719) 444-5900 or elizabethfredrickson@elpasoco.com.
- **The Denver Grandparents and Kin Program** assists relative caregivers (within the fifth degree of kinship) in Denver County by providing professional and peer support as well as informational, educational, financial, and advocacy services and, as needed, a clothing allowance. The program also makes referrals for legal assistance. *Contact:* Geraldine Bettis at (720) 944-3141 or bettisgl@dhs.co.denver.co.us.
- **Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Denver**, runs monthly support groups in five metro Denver locations. Child care and meals are provided during each support group meeting. Adult educational speakers, parent/child work-shops, and representatives from various community agencies speak to the group. In addition, there are family activities several times a year. Limited case management and advocacy services are available. A wide range of resource referrals is provided. Newsletters with information, activities and resources are sent out monthly to all kinship families, as well as to public agencies such as schools, family centers, and County departments of Human Resources. Three annual caregiver events are held: May Caregiver’s Day, Meet Your Elected Officials Day, and the Caregiver’s Christmas Party. Kinship families receive gifts through the Adopt-A-Family Program. *Contact:* Phone (303) 742-0828.
- **The Grandparents Resource Center** offers a series of educational and informative programs for kinship caregivers in the Denver area. The Center offers Pro Se Litigation training for kinship caregivers representing themselves in court. *Contact:* Natalie Pedrin, Director, at (303) 980-5707 or GRC4USA@aol.com.
- **Pikes Peak Family Connections** has a grandparents raising grandchildren support group which meets bi-weekly in Colorado Springs. Child care is available during the meetings. The group also co-sponsors annual family events and provides information and referrals for public benefits and legal assistance. The group assists grandparent caregivers



in El Paso and Terler Counties. *Contact:* Sandy Watford at (719) 596-3983.

- **The Lowry Family Center** in Denver, CO offers the Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) with the support of the Brookdale Foundation. This program provides grandparents and other relative caregivers counseling and referrals on legal, financial, clothing, housing, health insurance and subsidy services. Training is held twice monthly. *Contact:* Margaret L. Moore at (303) 340-7033 or margaret.moore@ccaaurora.edu.

Children in Foster Care

Sometimes state child welfare agencies place children in foster care with grand-parents or other relatives. Most state agencies call these placements “kinship care.” In Colorado, the Department of Human Services reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of 2004, the Department of Human Services averaged a total of 7,758 children in out-of-home placements per month. Of these children, 545 per month were placed with kin in certified kinship care homes. (Note: This data only describes children in “family-like” foster home settings and exclude other types of out-of-home care placements).

Preferences for kinship care: State policy requires that kin be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought for a child under the Department’s care.

Kinship care licensing: There is no separate licensing program for kinship foster parents. Kin have to meet the same licensing standards and requirements and receive the same foster care payment rate as non-kin foster parents.

Subsidized guardianship programs: In addition to foster care payments and other benefits available to kin raising children in the foster care system, some states also have subsidized guardianship programs. Most of these pro-grams offer ongoing subsidies to children who have left foster care to live permanently under the legal custody or guardianship of relatives. Although there is no state-wide subsidized guardianship program in Colorado, there are a few counties that provide this type of subsidy.



State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship foster care placements should be directed to Mary Griffin at (303) 866-3546 or mary.griffin@state.co.us.

Public Benefits

Children are often eligible for state and federal benefits even if their caregivers do not have legal guardianship or custody. These programs include:

Financial Assistance: Cash assistance may be available to children and their grandparents and other relative caregivers through the Colorado Works Program.

- A “child-only grant” is for the child and based *only* on the child’s income.
- An adult caregiver may also be included in the grant — based on their income and subject to work requirements and time limits.

Call (303) 866-5700 or log on to www.cdhs.state.co.us/oss/Self_Sufficiency.html.

Food Stamps: Kinship care families may be eligible for food stamps to help meet their children’s food and nutrition needs. For more information, call (303) 866-5700 or log on to www.cdhs.state.co.us/oss/Self_Sufficiency.html.

Health Insurance: Grandparents and other relative caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health insurance on behalf of the children they are raising through the Colorado Baby Care Kids Care or Child Health Plan (CHP+) programs. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for Medicaid or CHP+ , call (303) 839-2120 in Denver. Outside Denver, call (888) 367-6557 or log on to www.cchp.org.

Other Benefits: Other state and federal benefits may also be available to eligible children, such as child care subsidies, disability benefits, and special education services. For more information about these, download CDF’s benefit guides for grandparents and other relatives raising children at www.childrensdefense.org or call (202) 662-3568. For more information on the federal benefits that may be available to caregivers, log on to the National Council on Aging’s Benefits CheckUp web site at www.benefitscheckup.org.

State Law

The following state law may be helpful to grandparents and other relatives raising children¹:

Immunization Consent Law (Colo. Rev. Stat. 25-4-1704): This law allows a parent, legal guardian, or person vested with “legal custody or decision-making responsibility for the medical care of the minor” to consent verbally or in writing, to a child’s immunization or “an adult relative of the first or second degree of kinship.” The adult relative must tell the physician administering the shot of any of the child’s health concerns.

¹Laws change and are subject to different interpretations. These general descriptions are not intended as legal advice in any particular situation.

National Resources

AARP Grandparent Information Center	(888) 687-2277	www.aarp.org/grandparents
Adoption Information Clearinghouse	(888) 251-0075	http://naic.acf.hhs.gov/
The Brookdale Foundation Group	(212) 308 -7355	www.brookdalefoundation.org
Child Welfare League of America	(202) 638-2952	www.cwla.org
Children’s Defense Fund	(202) 628-8787	www.childrensdefense.org
Generations United	(202) 289-3979	www.gu.org
GrandsPlace	860) 763-5789	www.grandsplace.com
KINship Information Network	(772) 501-0502	www.kinsupport.org
National Aging Information Center	(202) 619-0724	www.aoa.dhhs.gov
National Committee of Grandparents For Children’s Rights	(866) 624-9900	www.grandparentsforchildren.org
The Urban Institute	(202) 833-7200	www.urban.org

Fact sheets are updated quarterly. Changes or additions should be e-mailed to the AARP Grandparent Information Center at gic@aarp.org. Please write “State Fact Sheets” on your e-mail subject line.