



# KENTUCKY

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 Kentucky, there are 57,141 children living in grandparent-headed households (5.7% of all children in the state). There are another 12,294 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.2 % of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Kentucky, 30,241 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 Kentucky, 35,818 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [3,061 in Louisville and 1,946 in Lexington/Fayette]: 15% of these grandparents are African American; 1% are Hispanic/Latino; and 82% are White. 45% 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](http://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/](http://www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/).

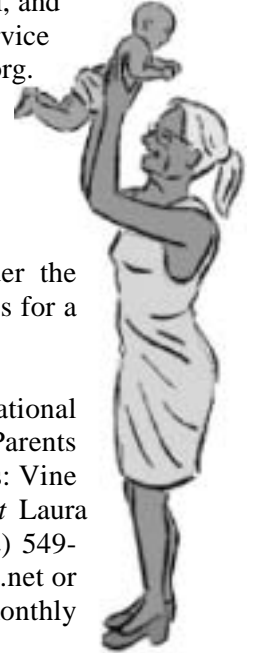
\* These data are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2. Profile Selected Social Characteristics:2000.



## Programs That Can Help

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- *The State Office for Aging Services' Kentucky KinCare Project* has provided small grants to fund support groups for grandparents and other relative caregivers throughout the state of Kentucky with support from the Brookdale Foundation's Relatives as Parents (RAPP) Program. Family resource and youth services centers attached to local schools across Kentucky generally coordinate the support groups and have provided additional funding for many of them. In addition to providing support through group activities and education, many groups are able to offer legal, health, and financial referrals to the caregivers with whom they are working. The state KinCare Project office can provide contact information for relative care support groups throughout the state. *Contact:* Robert Goodlet, Coordinator, at (502) 564-4986 or sandy.goodlet@ky.gov.
- *The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program* (housed in the Oak and Acorn Intergenerational Center in Louisville) provides a network of support groups as well as referrals for legal, mental health, medical, and financial issues to relative caregivers and the children for whom they are caring. The program's service area is primarily West Louisville. *Contact:* Rosa H. Mills at (502) 778-7418 or rmills@elderservice.org.
- *Office of Aging Services of the Lexington/Fayette Urban County Government* offers an annual kinship care conference for grandparents raising grandchildren in the Lexington area. *Contact:* Robynn Pease, Coordinator of Aging Services, at (859) 258-3806 or rpease@lfucg.com.
- *The Grandparents & Relatives Raising Children Support Group* serves the Newport area under the direction of the Kenton County Cooperative Extension Service. The program also provides referrals for a variety of kinship care services. *Contact:* Joan Bowling at (859) 356-3155 or jbowling@uky.edu.
- *Open Arms of Hardin County* provides support groups, general advocacy services, and educational resources for relative caregivers and foster parents. Open Arms sponsors Grandparents/Acting Parents Raising Children Support Group which offers three meetings each month at the following locations: Vine Grove Elementary, *contact* Anna Winchell at (270) 877-6026; Lincoln Trail Elementary, *contact* Laura Cooper, Founder, at (270) 737-5110; and Hodgenville Elementary, *contact* Gretta Muncy at (502) 549-3817; Creekside/Sonora Elementary, *contact* (270) 369-8460. *Contact:* openarmssupportgrp@alltel.net or www.hardin.k12.us/trail/openarms/openarms.html. To receive a monthly flyer and calendar of monthly events contact any of the persons listed above.
- *Learning and Loving KinCare Program* provides services to kinship caregivers in the Bell County region of Kentucky through support groups and referrals to mental health, healthcare, and home support services. *Contact:* Melissa Thomas at (606) 337-7895 or mthomas@bell.k12.ky.us.
- *The Family Resource Youth Services Center (FRYSC) Grandparent's Group* provides a monthly support group and referrals to relative caregivers in western Kentucky. The most common referrals made to relative caregivers are for legal, health care, home health, and mental health services. *Contact:* Opal Oakley, Director, Murray City Schools Family Resource Youth and Youth Services Center, at (270) 759-9592 or Toakley@charter.net.



## Children in Foster Care

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Sometimes state child welfare agencies place children in foster care with grandparents or other relatives. Most state agencies call these placements "kinship care." In Kentucky, the Department for Community Based Services reports:

*Number of children in kinship care:* As of March 12, 2005, the Department for Community Based Services had a total of 7,052 children in foster care and 6,165 children in kinship placements (the kinship and foster care programs in Kentucky are separate).

*Preferences for kinship care:* State policy requires that kin be sought out and given preference as a placement option when an out-of-home placement is needed for a child under the Department's care.

*Kinship care licensing:* Kinship care providers are generally approved based upon different standards than non-kin

foster parents. Some kinship caregivers may, in rare instances, become licensed foster parents. However, most commonly, kinship care providers are approved through a process that is different from the foster care licensing process. Once kin are approved, they receive a monthly payment through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

**Subsidized guardianship programs:** In addition to foster care payments and other benefits available to kin raising children in foster care, some states also have subsidized guardianship programs. Most of these programs offer ongoing subsidies to children who have left foster care to live permanently under the legal custody or guardianship of relatives. Subsidized guardianship is offered in Kentucky to kinship care providers willing to permanently care for children for whom reunification or adoption is not possible. It is offered as an alternative to foster care. A child who has not been adjudicated abused or neglected is not eligible for the subsidized guardianship program (KY Statute 605.120). Contact Marian Call at [marian.call@ky.gov](mailto:marian.call@ky.gov) or (502) 564-2136.

**State kinship care contact:** Questions about kinship care should be directed to Marian Call at [marian.call@ky.gov](mailto:marian.call@ky.gov) or Lisa Durbin at [lisaa.durbin@ky.gov](mailto:lisaa.durbin@ky.gov) or call (502) 564-2136.

## Public Benefits

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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 Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (K-TAP).

- 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 (502) 564-7050 or log on to <http://chfs.ky.gov/help/KTAP.asp>.

**Food Stamps:** Kinship care families may also be eligible for food stamps to help meet their children’s food and nutrition needs. For more information, call (502) 564-7050 or log on to [http://chfs.ky.gov/help/food\\_stamps.asp](http://chfs.ky.gov/help/food_stamps.asp).

**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 Kentucky Children’s Health Insurance Program (KCHIP). In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free health coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for KCHIP program, call (877) 524-4718 or log on to <http://cfc.ky.gov/help/kchip.asp>.

**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](http://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 website at [www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org).

## State Laws

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The following state law may be helpful to grandparents and other relatives raising children<sup>1</sup>:

**De Facto Custodian (Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 403.270):** This law allows a court to declare a relative or non-related caretaker as a child’s custodian. The “de facto custodian” must show that he or she has been the primary caretaker and financial supporter of a child six months or more (if the child is under three years of age) and for a period of one year or more (if the child is three years of age or older or has been placed by the Department for Community Based Services).

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

## National Resources

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

*Fact sheets are updated quarterly. Changes or additions should be e-mailed to the AARP Grandparent Information Center at [gic@aarp.org](mailto:gic@aarp.org). Please write "State Fact Sheets" on your e-mail subject line.*