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A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children



September 2005

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 Missouri, there are 77,857 children living in grandparent-headed households (5.5 % of all children in the state). There are another 18,555 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.3 % of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Missouri, 39,188 are living there without either parent present.

The Grandparents

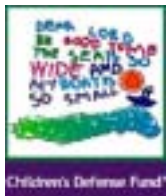
- Nationally, 2.4 million grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them: 29% of these grandparents are African American; 17% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3% are Asian; and 47% are White. 34% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 71% are under the age of 60; 19% live in poverty.
- In Missouri, 43,907 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [4,671 in St. Louis and 4,411 in Kansas City]: 25% of these grandparents are African American; 2% are Hispanic/Latino; and 70% are White. 40% 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/.

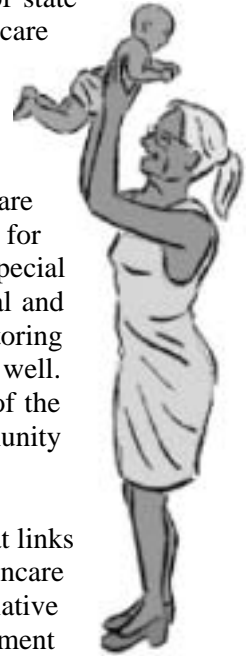
* These data are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2. Profile Selected Social Characteristics:2000.

The Brookdale Foundation



Programs That Can Help

- ***The University of Missouri Extension Service*** addresses a wide variety of aging and intergenerational issues including those barriers facing Missouri relatives as parents. Twelve new task force/support groups have been initiated across the state to specifically address the needs of relatives as parent in rural communities. The curriculum “Parenting the Second Time Around” has been utilized in several locations and has been helpful in disseminating information and resources. Contact: Elizabeth Reinsch, Human Development Specialist, at (314) 615-2911 or reinsche@missouri.edu.
- ***The Missouri Coalition of Grandparents and Relative Caregivers*** is composed of a number of state agencies and relative caregivers who are striving to be heard as a statewide voice for relative care families in Missouri. The Coalition is working on a de facto custody law, a state resource guide, and enhancing several warm-lines for caregivers throughout the state. Contact: Ile Haggins, Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City at (816) 234-3676 or idhaggins@cmh.edu.
- ***Community Counseling Center*** offers support to both relative caregivers and the children they are caring for through their multi-service Relatives As Parents Program. The peer support groups for grandparents and other relatives raising children meet bi-monthly and include guest speakers on special topics, such as legislative issues. In addition, the Community Counseling Center offers individual and family counseling for kinship caregivers as well as other psychiatric outpatient services. Mentoring services and children’s targeted case management are available to the children in these families as well. Their facility is located in Cape Girardeau and serves five counties in the southeastern quadrant of the state of Missouri. Contact: Barb Mayfield, Facilitator, Children’s Alternative Services, Community Counseling Center, at (573) 334-1100.
- ***Gateway Grandparents Kinship Network*** is a coalition of agencies in the St. Louis Metro area that links relatives as parents with local resources. It has developed a resource guide, a newsletter, “Kincare Connections,” and held several conferences in the St. Louis area where service providers and relative caregivers can share information and resources. Contact: Elizabeth Reinsch, Human Development Specialist, at (314) 615-2911 or reinsche@missouri.edu. The website is <http://extension.missouri.edu/ecregion/grandparent>.
- ***The University of Missouri, Kansas City Grandparents as Parents Outreach Program*** provides daily information and referral services for grandparents and other relatives raising children. The program also offers monthly educational workshops in which both grandparents and grandchildren may participate. In addition, they operate a 6-week summer camp for children being raised by relatives on the University campus that includes cultural enrichment and a supportive atmosphere. A mentoring program for children of all ages is also available. Contact: Vanessa Wates, Project Coordinator/ Director, Grandparents as Parents Outreach Program, at (816) 444-7012 or watesv@srge.org.
- ***The Kansas City Grandparent Warmline*** at (816) 444-0660 is a resource and referral line especially designed for grandparents and other caregivers raising grandchildren/relative children. The Kansas City Grandparent Warmline has a listing of resources to help grandparents and other caregivers better provide for their children. The Kansas City Grandparent Warmline is a collaboration of numerous local agencies who serve grandparents and other caregivers raising grandchildren/relative children.
- ***Cardinal Ritter Senior Services*** operates two support groups for grandparents and other relatives raising children: Keepers of the Flame and Proud Grandparents. These groups provide educational services and emotional support for grandparents and other relatives raising children in the St. Louis area. The program also runs a warmline for caregivers at (314) 961-8000 (ext. 242). Contact: Claudia Angenor, Outreach Social Worker, at (314) 752-1901 or cangenor@ccstl.org.



Children in Foster Care

Sometimes state child welfare agencies place children in foster care with grandparents or other relatives. Most state agencies call these placements “kinship care.” In Missouri, the Department of Social Services, Division of Family

Services reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of January 2005, there were 11,175 children in out-of-home placements under the Department's supervision. Of these children, 1,568 were placed with kin.

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 kin 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 have subsidized guardianship program. Missouri has a state-funded subsidized guardianship program, the Non-Parent Caretaker Relative (NPCR) Program, which provides an ongoing permanency assistance payment to eligible kin (defined to include an adult sibling, an aunt, uncle, or grandparent) who become the legal guardians of a child. The permanency assistance payment is the same as the foster care payment (Mo. Rev. Stat., § 453.072). *Contact:* Lanette Bowring, Missouri Division of Family Services, at (573) 751-6529 or lbowring@mail.state.mo.us.

Missouri has also established the GrandparentsAs Foster Parents (GAFF) Pro-gram. Grandparents must petition the Court to become the child's legal custodian or guardian. Caretaker guardians receive 25% of the foster care subsidy rate, plus a yearly clothing allowance, respite care, legal assistance (up to \$500 per child), a mileage benefit, and child care (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 208.029). *Contact:* Terri Mendenhall, Program Development Specialist, Missouri Division of Family Services at (573) 751-4269 or Terri.D.Mendenhall@dss.mo.gov.

State kinship care contact: about kinship care should be directed to Lesley Pettit, Department of Social Services, Division of Family Services, at (573) 751-9604.

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 payments may be available to children and their grandparents and other relative caregivers through the Temporary Assistance 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 TANF grant — based on their income and subject to work requirements and time limits.



Call (573) 751-3221 or log on to www.dss.mo.gov/dfs/tempa.htm.

Food Stamps: Based on the family's income, kinship care families may also be eligible for food stamps to help meet food and nutrition needs. For more information about these programs, call (573) 751-3221 or log on to www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/fstamp/index.htm.

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 MC+ program. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free health coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for MC+, call (888) 275-5908 or log on to www.dss.mo.gov/mcplus/index.htm.

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 Laws

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

Medical consent (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 431.058) and (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 431.061): This law states that a grandparent, brother or sister, aunt or uncle, or stepparent of a child who is the child’s primary caregiver may delegate in writing the authority to consent to immunization to another adult. Oral or written consent for other medical and surgical procedures can be given by persons acting in loco parentis. Adult siblings and grandparents can also consent if the parent is absent.

Educational Enrollment (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 167.151): This law allows the following categories of children to attend the public schools of any district in the state in which they have a permanent or temporary home without paying a tuition fee: orphan children, children with only one parent living, and children whose parents do not contribute to their support – if the children are between the ages of 6 and 22 and are unable to pay tuition.

¹ *Laws 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.