



MISSISSIPPI

A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

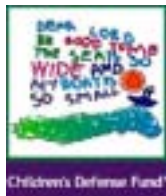


September 2005

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 Mississippi, there are 83,593 children living in grandparent-headed households (10.8 % of all children in the state). There are another 17,963 children living in households headed by other relatives (2.3 % of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Mississippi, 46,693 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 Mississippi, 48,061 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [3,700 in Jackson and 1,159 in Gulfport]: 64% of these grand-parents are African American; 1% are Hispanic/Latino; and 34% are White. 33% 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

- *The Pinebelt Association for Families Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP)* conducts support programs in Forrest, Jones, and Covington Counties in Southern Mississippi. The program includes a caring and sharing time as well as educational topics ranging from drug prevention to dealing with chronic diseases in the elderly to healthy lifestyle changes through guided exercise and nutrition. The support groups meet once a month for an hour and a half and provide food and child care. Monthly family recreational outings and a summer enrichment group for grandchildren are also part of the program plan. *Contact:* Dr. Sylvia Forster, Executive Director, Pinebelt Association for Families at (601) 582-0909 or brightpaff@aol.com. You can also log on to www.paffpetal.org. In Northern Mississippi, support groups for grandparents and other relatives are organized by Dr. Jo Ann O'Quinn, Associate Professor of Social Work, School of Social Work, University of Mississippi, at (662) 915-7199 or joquin@olemiss.edu.

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 Mississippi, the Department of Human Services, Children and Family Services reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of June 31, 2005, there were 2,949 children in out-of-home placements under the Department’s supervision. Of these children, 936 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 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. A waiver for kinship foster parents can be requested for licensing requirements that do not affect the child’s safety (e.g. income, age, physical space). Waivers are subject to approval by the State Licensing Authority.

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 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. Mississippi currently does not have a subsidized guardianship program.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship foster care placements should be directed to Barbara Proctor, Children and Family Services, at (601) 359-4995 or bproctor@mdhs.state.ms.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 payments may be available to children and their grandparents and other relative caregivers through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) 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 (601) 359-4900 or log on to www.mdhs.state.ms.us/ea_tanf.html.

Food Stamps: Kinship care families may also be eligible for food stamps to help meet their children’s food and nutrition needs. Call (601) 359-4900 or log on to www.mdhs.state.ms.us/ea_tanf.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 Medicaid and Mississippi’s Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free health coverage under Medicaid. For more information about Mississippi Health Benefits (Medicaid and CHIP), relative caregivers should call (800) 421-2408 or log on to www.medicaid.state.ms.us.

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 website at www.benefitscheckup.org.

State Law

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

Medical Consent (Miss Code Ann. § 41-41-3): This law allows any person standing in loco parentis or any guardian, conservator or custodian to consent to medical treatment on behalf of a child. Authorized medical care includes any surgical or medical treatment or procedures not prohibited by law that may be directed by the child’s physician.

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.