



OHIO

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 Ohio, there are 157,298 children living in grandparent-headed households (5.4% of all children in the state). There are another 35,333 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 Ohio, 76,794 are living there without either parent present.

The Grandparents

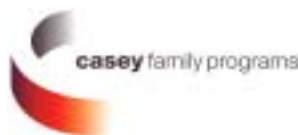
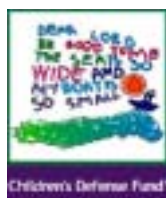
- Nationally, 2.4 million grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them: 29% of these grandparents are African American; 17% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3% are Asian; and 47% are White. 34% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 71% are under the age of 60; 19% live in poverty.
- In Ohio, 86,009 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [7,039 in Cleveland and 6,263 in Columbus]: 27% of these grandparents are African American; 2% are Hispanic/Latino; and 68% 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/.

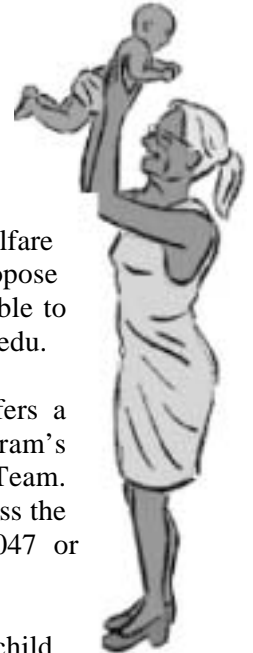
* These data are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2. Profile Selected Social Characteristics: 2000.

The Brookdale Foundation



Programs That Can Help

- ***The Ohio Department of Jobs and Family*** has established the Kinship Care Navigator Program. The program provides kinship caregivers with assistance in obtaining information about benefits and services, including child care, support groups, respite care, training on how to care for children with special needs, and legal services. The program also has published a self-help manual, *Relatives Caring for Children: Ohio Resource Guide*. *Contact:* Help Desk, Office of Children and Families, at (866) 886-3537 (option 4) or ocfeedback@odjfs.state.oh.us.
- ***The Ohio Department of Aging's Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force*** has developed a comprehensive strategic agenda to support kinship care families across the state. Submitted to the Ohio General Assembly in 1999, the *Ohio Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force Report* summarizes the task force policy recommendations. *Contact:* Mozell Mackey, Ohio State Department of Aging, at (614) 466-0749 or mmackey@age.state.oh.us.
- ***Wright State University Kettering Center*** has developed the GrandParent GrandChildren Initiative (GPGCI). This program encourages local organizations to develop new programs to meet the needs of kinship caregivers and to remove barriers in accessing services. *Contact:* Dionne Henderson, at (937) 775-1116, or Dionne.Henderson@wright.edu.
- ***The Ohio Grandparent Coalition*** is a statewide group comprised of kinship caregivers, child welfare agencies, and service providers. The purpose of the group is to identify kinship care issues and propose solutions to government and other agencies. A quarterly newsletter is published and made available to kinship caregivers. *Contact:* Dionne Henderson, at (937) 775-1116, or Dionne.Henderson@wright.edu.
- ***The Ohio State University Human Development and Family Sciences Extension Program*** offers a variety of resources for kinship caregivers and their families. Caregivers can access the program's quarterly newsletter, *The Hotline*, which has been developed by the Extension's Senior Services Team. Each issue contains articles on topics of interest to older adults and their families. You can also access the *Senior Services Fact Sheets* on different issues, including caregiving. *Contact:* (614) 247-6047 or rflowers@hec.ohio-state.edu. You can access their website at www.hec.ohio-state.edu/.
- ***The Ohio State University Extension of Sandusky County*** offers a Directory of Resources on child care, clothing, education, employment, family support services, financial assistance, health care, hunger, housing and homelessness, and legal issues. This Directory was developed to assist grandparents who need help raising their grandchildren. *Contact:* Sharon L. Mader, Ohio State University Extension Agent, Family and Consumer Sciences, Sandusky County, at (419) 334-6340, or sand@postoffice.ag.ohio-state.edu, or access the Directory's website at www.sandusky.osu.edu/gparent/gparent.htm
- ***Guernsey County Children's Services*** provides the Guernsey County Kinship Support Group for grandparents and any other relatives who are providing kinship care. The group offers community speakers and a licensed social worker to address the needs and concerns of the kinship caregivers. The program also organizes outings, family events, and kinship conferences. *Contact:* Jolene Williamson, Kinship Coordinator, at (740) 439-5555 or williamsj@odjfs.state.oh.us.
- ***The Area Agency on Aging, District 7*** serves grandparents and other relatives raising children in Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties. The programs offered include a monthly support group and information and referrals for legal services, custody, respite services, recreational activities, educational materials, Medicaid and TANF. There are also recreational activities provided as well volunteers to provide babysitting services. *Contact:* Merritt Sessor at (800) 582-7277 or msessor@aaa7.org.
- ***Licking County Department of Job and Family Services*** offers support services for relative caregivers through its Kinship Navigation Program. Through their "It's All Relative" support group, caregivers raising children in foster care are provided with information on legal options, resource referrals, parenting skills, and respite care. Child care is also available during support group meetings. *Contact:* Sandy Williams, Kinship Navigator, at 740-349-6237 or willis09@odjfs.state.oh.us.



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 Ohio, the Department of Job and Family Services, Bureau of Family Services reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of March 2002, there were 20,765 children under the Department’s supervision in out-of-home placements. Of these children, 4,000 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. Relatives have to meet the same licensing standards but are not required to attend all the training sessions that non-relative foster parents are required to attend. Relative foster parents receive the foster care payment rate from Ohio Works First, which is a different rate than the rate received by non-relative 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. Ohio does not currently have a statewide subsidized guardianship program. However, several counties now offer their own subsidized guardianship programs. Each county develops its own eligibility guide-lines. *Contact:* Carrie Anthony, Placement Section Chief, at (614) 466-9274.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship foster placements should be directed to Carrie Anthony, Placement Section Chief, at (614) 466-9274 or anthonc@odjfs.state.oh.us.

Training and support for kinship foster parents: The Ohio Family Care Association is a state-wide advocacy, education and support structure for resource families (kinship, foster, and adoptive). It provides educational conferences, individual phone support, and a connection to what is happening in child serving systems. Agency contacts and training resources can be found at www.ofcaonline.org. *Contact:* Dot Erickson at (614) 268-7776 or OFCA@aol.com.

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 Ohio Works First (OWF) 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 (614) 466-6282 or log on to <http://jfs.ohio.gov>.

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 (614) 466-6282 or log on to <http://jfs.ohio.gov>.

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 Ohio’s Healthy Start program. The state offers a Healthy Start brochure geared specifically to kinship care families. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under

Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for these programs, call (800) 324-8680 or log on to <http://jfs.ohio.gov>.

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

Educational Consent (Oh. Rev. Code Ann. § 3313.64(11): This law allows relatives raising children to exercise authority in school issues under certain circumstances.

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.