



RHODE ISLAND

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.

The Brookdale Foundation

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 Rhode Island, there are 11,231 children living in grandparent-headed households (4.5% of all children in the state). There are another 3,372 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.4% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Rhode Island, 5,170 are living there without either parent present.

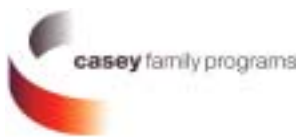
The Grandparents

- 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 Rhode Island, 5,060 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [1,219 in Providence]: 9% of these grandparents are African American; 16% are Hispanic/Latino; 1% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 5% are Asian; and 65% are White. 36% 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 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 City of Warwick Senior Services and Youth Division* offers the KinCare Alliance for kinship care providers in the city and surrounding areas. The program provides education training and support services for kinship care families. It also hosts recreational activities and offers social services to address the needs and concerns of kinship care providers. *Contact:* Gloria Fairbanks, Youth Program Coordinator, at (401) 732-7832.
- *The Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs* chairs the State Inter-Systems Task Force, which meets bi-annually to discuss services for relative caregivers. The Task Force originally established five support groups across the state for grandparents and other relatives raising children. Several of those support groups are still meeting occasionally, and at least one of them, at the South County Mental Health Center, still meets on a monthly basis. The Department of Elderly Affairs offers KidKamp Connection for relative caregivers over the age of 60 and children under the age of 18. KidKamp provides scholarships for the children to participate in camp during summer and school vacations, as well as other recreational programs during the year. This offers respite for both the children and the caregivers. KidCamp is funded through the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) and only serves those caregivers under 60 or children over the age of 18. *Contact:* Joan D'Agostino, Chief, Program Development, Department of Elderly Affairs at (401) 462-0507 or joand@dea.state.ri.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 Rhode Island, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of August 1, 2005, there were 2,384 children in out-of-home placements under the DCYF’s supervision. Of these children, 758 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 DCYF’s care. State law further requires that the department’s social workers search for kin and assess possible kinship placements during the first 30 days that the case is open.

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 foster care, some states also have subsidized guardianship programs. Rhode Island has a policy memorandum which authorizes relative caregivers to receive guardianship subsidies. The ongoing permanency assistance payment is the same as the state foster care payment and will be granted only to those who pass DCYF qualifications. *Contact:* Maureen Robbins, Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Clinical Training Specialist, at (401) 528-3799 or robbinm@dcyf.state.ri.us.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship foster care placements should be directed to Maureen Robbins, Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Clinical Training Specialist, at (401) 528-3799 or maureen.robbins@dcyf.ri.gov.



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 Family Independence Program (FIP).

- 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 (401) 462-5300 or log on to www.dhs.state.ri.us/dhs/famchild/dfipgm.htm.

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, log on to www.dhs.state.ri.us/dhs/famchild/fsfamchi.htm or call (800) 282-7021.

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 RItE Care, a Medicaid expansion program. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for RItE Care, call (401) 462-5300 or log on to www.dhs.state.ri.us/dhs/famchild/shcare.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 law may be helpful to grandparents and other relatives raising children¹:

Educational Enrollment (R.I. Gen laws sec. 16-64-1): When parents die, abandon a child, or are unable to care for the child due to illness or family break-up, Rhode Island law considers a child a resident of the town where child lives with legal guardian, natural guardian, or other person acting in loco parentis (as the child’s parent).

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.