



# TEXAS

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 Texas, there are 448,439 children living in grandparent-headed households (7.6% of all children in the state). There are another 153,381 children living in households headed by other relatives (2.6% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Texas, 244,100 are living there without either parent present.

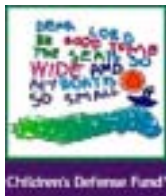
### The Grandparents

- 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 Texas, 257,074 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [25,347 in Houston, 15,075 in San Antonio, and 15,019 in Dallas]: 21% of these grandparents are African American; 42% are Hispanic/Latino; 1% are Asian; and 35% are White. 32% 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/).

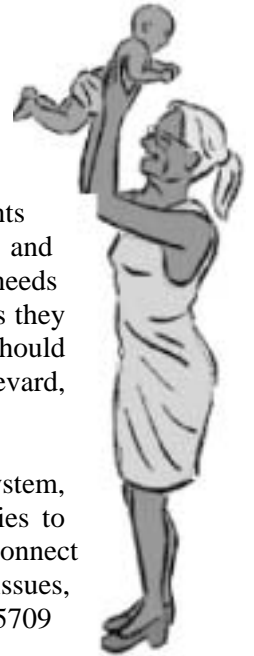
\* These data are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2. Profile Selected Social Characteristics: 2000.



## Programs That Can Help

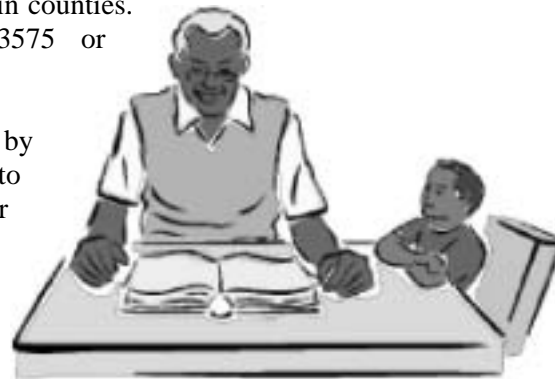
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- ***The Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services' Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)*** offer information and referrals for all Texas seniors, including grandparents raising grandchildren. Referrals are available for support groups, respite care, and other services. Seniors are connected to the agency in their local county, where the availability of services for kinship care families varies. *Contact:* AAA hotline at (800) 252-9240 or [www.dads.state.tx.us/contact/aaa\\_directory.htm](http://www.dads.state.tx.us/contact/aaa_directory.htm) or Gary Jessee, Director, Office of AAA Support and Operations, Texas Department of Aging, at (512) 438-4245 or [gary.jessee@dads.state.tx.us](mailto:gary.jessee@dads.state.tx.us).
- ***The Texas Department on Aging & Disability Services***, in 2002, initiated a Brookdale Foundation-funded State Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP), which functions in collaboration with Texas Legal Services Center to establish a Kincare Taskforce, a Kincare Listserv, and to actively support the establishment of new support groups. The program helps kincare providers understand related legal issues, particularly medical consent, custody and TANF. The Listserv permits exchange of information among those on the front lines of kinship support. *Contact:* Gary Jessee at (512) 438-4245 or [gary.jessee@dads.state.tx.us](mailto:gary.jessee@dads.state.tx.us).
- ***Elder Options of Texas*** is another on-line information and referral resource for senior housing and elder care information. The site offers information on support groups, respite care, and contact information based on location. *Contact:* Log on to <http://elderoptionsoftexas.com>.
- ***The AARP's Texas Office*** is leading a growing effort to create grassroots coalitions of grandparents and other relatives raising children in the San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas. With the resources and support of AARP's national office, the coalitions will focus on creating public awareness about the needs of Texas kinship care families and educating Texas legislators and policy makers about the services they need. *Contact:* For more information about how to join these coalitions, Texas kinship caregivers should send their name, address, phone, and e-mail address to: AARP Texas Office, 98 San Jacinto Boulevard, Suite 750, Austin, Texas 78701, call toll-free at (866) 227-7443 or (512) 480-9797.
- ***The City of Dallas Office of Senior Affairs*** has partnerships with representatives from the school system, community organizations, governmental entities, faith-based organizations, and non-profit agencies to provide materials and resources to relative caregivers in the Dallas Metropolitan area. They help to connect relative caregivers to local services and provide general information on public benefits, legal issues, support groups, and coalition-building efforts in the area. *Contact:* Constance Smith at (214) 670-5709 or [cosmith@mail.ci.dallas.tx.us](mailto:cosmith@mail.ci.dallas.tx.us).
- ***The Urban League of Greater Dallas*** has formed the Grandparents Resource Group to provide a support network of services to grandparents and other relatives raising children. They offer monthly support group meetings, case management, counseling services, benefits check-up, information and referral services, mentoring and tutoring, parenting and educational training, an Annual Grandparents' Celebration, and other Urban League services including computer training, GED preparation, employment referrals, housing assistance, and health screening. Case coordination and follow-up services are done to ensure that the caregivers' needs are met. *Contact:* Jill Payne at (214) 915-4600 or [jpayne@ulgdncx.com](mailto:jpayne@ulgdncx.com).
- ***The Parent Education Project of the University of Houston***, one of The Brookdale Foundation's local Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP) sites, offers a variety of services for grandparents and other relatives raising children: two school-based support groups, a monthly conference call support group, an at-home "parenting" course for relative caregivers seeking legal custody of the children in their care, information and referral services, and a RAPP Resource Guide and Technical Assistance to other groups interested in forming RAPPs in the Houston area. *Contact:* Angie Grindon at (713) 743-5491 or [agrindon@uh.edu](mailto:agrindon@uh.edu).
- ***Trinity Fellowship Church*** has a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren "lifegroup" that meets once a month in Amarillo. The group is led by grandparent caregivers. *Contact:* John and Joyce Boland at (806) 352-5080.
- ***ESCAPE Family Resource Center*** offers Circle of Love, a parenting course for kinship caregivers and the children they are raising in the Houston area. The eight-week course includes such topics as how to deal with the absence of the



biological parents, caregivers' loss of their roles as traditional grandparents, how to ease transitions for children, helping everyone to maintain a positive relationship with the biological parent, and a broad range of communication, problem solving, and family living skills. Caregivers and children are divided into separate discussion groups and are then brought back together at the end of class to explore relevant issues as a family. Classes are \$50 per family. *Contact:* Cassy Bentley, Program Specialist, at (713) 942-9500 (ext. 37) or [cassyb@escapefrc.org](mailto:cassyb@escapefrc.org).

- ***The Bexar Area Agency on Aging (AAA)*** offers a Grandparent/Kinship Program, using funds from the National Family Caregiver Support Program. Grandparents or other relatives, aged 60 or older, who are providing primary care for the children in their homes can receive services including: information about services available in Bexar County for themselves or the children and assisting obtaining such services; individual counseling, support groups, and parenting classes; respite care; supplemental services, on a limited basis, to complement the support provided by the program; a Resources Book of available services for kinship families; and a Warm-Line, (210) 619-8255, operated through the Department of Human Services that provides information on the services available through DHS, as well as referrals to other resources. *Contact:* Nellie J. Garay, Caregiver Specialist, at (210) 362-5271, or Information and Assistance Line at (210) 362-5254.
- ***The Collin County Children's Advocacy Center*** in Plano offers a weekly kinship support group for grandparents and other relatives raising children. The meeting is open to any full-time relative caregiver. The group provides emotional support as well as helps caregivers to deal with financial concerns, legal issues, childcare concerns, discipline problems, health insurance issues, and issues with the schools. Childcare is provided during the group meeting. *Contact:* Summer Land, M.Ed, LPC, at (972) 633-6688.
- ***The Texoma Kinicare Support Network Caregiver Program***, a local RAPP operated by the Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities of Texoma, offers services to grandparents and other relative caregivers including support groups, stress management classes, a monthly newsletter, individual counseling, and educational and recreational activities for both grandparents and grandchildren. They serve Cooke, Grayson, and Fannin counties. *Contact:* Judy E. Troxtell, Caregiver Specialist at (903) 813-3575 or [jtroxtell@texoma.cog.tx.us](mailto:jtroxtell@texoma.cog.tx.us).
- ***The Abuelos Con Cariño Program in El Paso***, a local RAPP operated by the Child Crisis Center of El Paso, offers parenting and support classes to grandparents raising their grandchildren. They offer respite for grandchildren, from birth to 12 years old, 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week at their nursery and shelter. *Contact:* Ruby Martin, Family Support Coordinator, at (915) 562-7955 or [rmartin@childcrisiselp.org](mailto:rmartin@childcrisiselp.org).
- ***The Area Agency on Aging of the Panhandle*** provides information and services to grandparents and other senior caregivers ages 60 and over who are raising children under the age of 18. Serving 26 counties in the Texas Panhandle, the organization provides basic information on public benefits, support groups and limited funding for respite services. The organization also works closely with the Community Resource Coordination Groups to provide individual case services. *Contact:* Teana Waller, Caregiver Specialist, at (806) 331-2227 or [twaller@prpc.cog.tx.us](mailto:twaller@prpc.cog.tx.us).



## 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 Texas, the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (DPRS) reports:

***Number of children in kinship care:*** At the end of FY 2004, there were 24,453 children in out-of-home placements in Texas. Of these children, 4,516 were placed with kin.

***Preferences for kinship care:*** State law requires that kin be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought for a child under DPRS's care.

***Kinship care licensing:*** There is no separate licensing program for kinship foster parents. Kin have to meet the same licensing standards 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 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 of guardianship of relatives. Texas currently does not have a subsidized guardianship program.

***State kinship care contact:*** Questions about kinship foster placements should be directed to (512) 438-3312.

***Training and support for kinship foster parents:*** The State Foster Parent Association in Texas, Texas State Foster Parents, Inc. (TSFPI), serves kin and non-kin foster parents. Contact: Roy Block, President, at (210) 493 - 7567 or royblocktsfpi@aol.com. The website is [www.TSFPI.org](http://www.TSFPI.org).

## 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 Texas Works 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 (800) 448-3927 or log on to [www.dhs.state.tx.us/programs/TexasWorks/index.html](http://www.dhs.state.tx.us/programs/TexasWorks/index.html) or call “211” for information about all the health and human services in your community.

***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 (800) 448-3927 or log on to [www.dhs.state.tx.us/programs/TexasWorks/index.html](http://www.dhs.state.tx.us/programs/TexasWorks/index.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 the TexCare Partnership, which includes Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for Medicaid, call (800) 647-6558 or log on to [www.texcarepartnership.com](http://www.texcarepartnership.com).

***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 web site 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>:

***Medical Consent (Tex. Fam. Code Ann. §§ 32.001 et seq.):*** This law allows a child’s grandparent, adult sibling, aunt, or uncle and designated others to consent to medical, dental, psychological, and surgical treatment for a child when the child’s parent or guardian cannot be contacted and has not given notice that he or she opposes the treatment.

<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.*

