



NORTH CAROLINA

A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children



July 2006

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 North Carolina, there are 135,158 children living in grandparent-headed households (6.9% of all the children in the state). There are another 39,043 children living in households headed by other relatives (2.0 % of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in North Carolina, 80,126 are living there without either parent present.

The Grandparents



- Nationally, 2.4 million grandparents report they are responsible for their grand-children 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 North Carolina, 79,810 grandparents report they are responsible for their grand-children living with them [5,175 in Charlotte]: 47% of these grandparents are African American; 2% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; and 47% are White. 43% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 71% are under the age of 60; 19% live in poverty.

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/cen2000/briefs.html.
- Additional national and state data on grandparents raising children are available on AARP's website at www.aarp.org/grandparents.

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



Programs That Can Help

- *The North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services and the North Carolina Cooperative Extension* are North Carolina's state-level partners in the Brookdale Foundation's Relatives as Parents Program. The two organizations act as catalysts and connectors for grandparents and other relatives raising children program efforts in the state and to provide information, referrals, and technical assistance where they can be helpful. Contact: Lynne Berry, North Carolina Division of Aging or Adult Services, at (919)733-3983 or lynne.berry@ncmail.net. You can also contact Luci Bearon, North Carolina Cooperative Extension at (919) 515-9146 or luci_bearon@ncsu.edu.
- *YWCA of Greensboro* offers a support group for grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren that features guest speakers, dinners, and activities for the children during the meetings. Contact: L. Nicole Baker, Community Outreach Director at (336) 273-3461 or nbaker@ywcagsonc.org.
- *North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services* has partnered with the Law Offices of Kilpatrick Stockton, LLC to provide free adoption assistance in Wake, Forsyth and Mecklenburg Counties to grandparents and other relative caregivers with a limited income of no more than 200% of the poverty line. Adoption assistance is only provided when biological parents do not contest the adoption or termination of parental rights. Contact: Lynne Berry, Division of Aging and Adult Services, at (919) 733-8395 or lynne.berry@ncmail.net; or Emily Bowman, Division of Aging and Adult Services, at (919) 733-8395 or Emily.Bowman@ncmail.net.
- *Senior Resources of Guilford* sponsors a monthly lunch and learn meeting for grandparents and other relatives raising children in partnership with the YWCAs of Greensboro and High Point. The organization also publishes a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Resource Guide. Contact: Angela Earnes, Foster Grandparent Program Director at (336) 373-4816 or fgp@senior-resources-guilford.org.
- *The Grandchildren-Grandparents Rights of North Carolina* offers a support group on the first Saturday of each month at 11:00 am. Grandparent caregivers get together to network and discuss issues relevant to their care giving needs, and obtain information regarding available services in their state and local areas. Contact: Carol McRoberts, President, at (336) 685-5124, or mauricemcroberts@yahoo.com.
- *Several of North Carolina's Regional Area Agencies on Aging* have initiated services, including information and assistance, support groups, caregiver training and counseling, respite and supplemental services for kinship care families. Contact: Christine Urso, Family Caregiver Support Program Specialist, at (919) 733-3983, chris.urso@ncmail.net, or visit the Division of Aging website at www.dhhs.state.nc.us/aging/.
- *AARP North Carolina, the North Carolina Cooperative Extension and the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services* have collaborated to publish a comprehensive Resource Guide for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. Contact: Suzanne LaFollette-Cameron, Associate State Director, AARP North Carolina, at (919) 508-0269 or slcameron@aarp.org.
- *The Grandparenting Program at Winston-Salem University* offers many services for grandparents raising their grandchildren. The program offers direct health, social, and case management services, and also provides referrals to connect caregivers to quality child care services, after school care, and other caregiver needs. The Grandparenting Program offers individualized plans of developmental assessments, and has received funding from the Kellogg Foundation to implement a program addressing school readiness for children between the ages of birth and 7 years old. Contact: Dr. Lenora Campbell, at (336) 750-2577, or campbellr@wssu.edu.
- *The North Carolina Cooperative Extension* provides workshops and programs for grandparents and other relatives raising children and the professionals who serve them. Contact: Dr. Luci Bearon, Adult Development/ Aging Specialist, at (919) 515-9146 or luci_bearon@ncsu.edu.
- *The CARES Program of the UNC School of Social Work* in Chapel Hill also provides educational services to professionals who work with kinship care families. Contact: Gary Nelson, Director, at (919) 962-0650 or gmnelson@email.unc.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 North Carolina, the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services (DSS) reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of June 30, 2005, out of 10,829 children who entered out-of-home placements under DSS custody, 2,574 were placed with extended family or kin.

Preferences for kinship care: The Division of Social Services Manual states that “when children cannot be assured safety in their own homes, the best alternative resource can often be found within the extended family and other kin.” Additionally, the juvenile court supervising the child’s case is required to ascertain whether or not a relative is willing and able to provide proper care and supervision for the child.

Kinship care licensing: There is no separate licensing program for kinship foster parents. Kin have to meet the same licensing standards and training requirements and receive the same foster care payment rate as non-kin foster parents. However, DSS may apply for a waiver of some requirements of kin foster homes that do not affect the health and safety of the child.

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. North Carolina no longer has a federal waiver to continue its subsidized guardianship program.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship foster placements should be directed to Esther.High@ncmail.net

Training and Support for Kinship foster parents: The North Carolina State Foster Parent Association plays a significant role in the training and support of kinship foster parents, including helping DSS to recruit and retain foster parents and provide guidance on their training needs.



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 North Carolina’s Work First 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 (919) 733-9370, visit the website at www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/workfirst/index.htm, or contact your local county department of social services.

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 (919) 733-9370, visit the website at www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/foodstamp/index.htm, or contact your local county department of social services.

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 North Carolina Health Check and Health Choice for Children programs. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free health coverage under Medicaid. Contact NC Health Choice for Children at (800) 422-4658 or (800) 662-7030 or visit the website at www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dma/cpcont.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 (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 32A - 34): This law allows a custodial parent or other legal custodian to authorize another “adult in whose care the minor child has been living” to consent to health care for a child through the use of a notarized consent form.

Educational Consent (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C - 366): This law allows an adult who is raising a child without legal custody or guardianship to enroll that child in the school district where that adult lives.

Standby Guardianship (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 35A - 1370 et seq.): This law states that a parent or legal guardian of a minor may designate, in writing or by petition to the court, a stand-by guardian to become legally responsible for the minor in the event of the parent or legal guardian’s terminal illness, debilitating illness, or future incapacitation.

State contact for legal information related to kinship care in North Carolina: Lynne Berry, NC Division of Aging, Legal Services Developer, at (919) 733-8395 or Lynne.berry@ncmail.net.

¹Laws 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
Grandfamilies of America	(866) 272-3761	www.grandfamiliesofamerica.com
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 annually. 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.