



# ALASKA

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

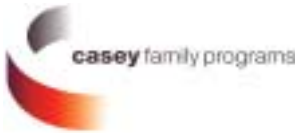
## National and State Data\*

### 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 Alaska, there are 8,188 children living in grandparent-headed households (4.3% of all children in the state). There are another 2,620 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 Alaska, 5,110 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 Alaska, 5,419 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [1,719 in Anchorage]: 4% of these grandparents are African American; 2% are Hispanic/Latino; 43% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 4% are Asian; 2% are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and 41% are White. 34% 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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*Volunteers of America* runs the program known as Grandfamilies Network Project. This program provides respite care, a monthly newsletter, runs support groups, and provides individual counseling services for kinship care families in the Anchorage area. In addition, Grandfamilies Network Project provides a summer camp for kinship caregivers and the children in their care. *Contact:* Tami Eller, Grandfamilies Network Coordinator at (888) 522-9866 or [grands@voaak.org](mailto:grands@voaak.org). The website is [www.voaak.org](http://www.voaak.org).

*The Resource Center for Parents and Children (RCPC)* offers a support group for grandparents raising grandchildren, fall through spring, in the Fairbanks area. The group meets once a month. The RCPC also offers information and referrals for kinship care families and a warm-line to answer parenting questions at (907) 452-4588. *Contact:* Angie Richardson at (907) 456-2866 (ext. 102) or [arichardson@rcpcfairbanks.org](mailto:arichardson@rcpcfairbanks.org).

## Children in Foster Care

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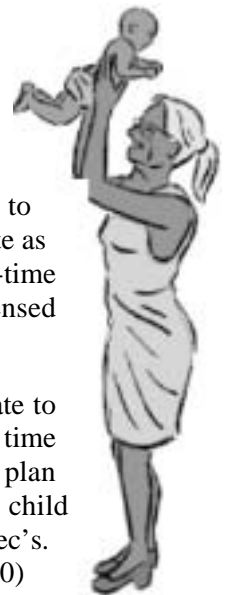
Sometimes state child welfare agencies place children in foster care with grandparents or other relatives. Most state agencies call these placements “kinship care.” In Alaska, the Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) reports:

*Number of children in kinship care:* As of September 30, 2004, there were 2,012 children in out-of-home placements under the Division’s supervision. Of these children, 626 were placed with kin.

*Preferences for kinship care:* Alaska law requires that kinship care be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought for an abused or neglected 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. In some cases, however, the state will reimburse non-licensed kin for certain one-time expenses related to the care of the child. It also provides some training opportunities to non-licensed relative caregivers.

*Subsidized guardianship programs:* Alaska has a subsidized guardianship program that allows the state to make subsidy payments to relative and non-relative guardians of children who are in state custody at the time the guardianship plan is made. The state may only award the subsidy if guardianship is the permanent plan for the child, the subsidy is recommended by the DFYS Permanency Planning Conference Team, the child meets the other established criteria, and the family has an approved guardianship study. (AK Stat. Sec’s. 13.26.062, 25.23.190-25.23.240 and 47.14.100. Regs at AK Admin. Cd., Volume 7, Sec. 53-200-53.250) *Contact:* Cora Reece, administrative clerk, at (907) 465-3204 or [cora\\_reece@health.state.ak.us](mailto:cora_reece@health.state.ak.us).



*State kinship care contact:* Questions about kinship foster placements should be directed to Izabel Bowers at (907) 465-2218 or [izabel\\_bowers@health.state.ak.us](mailto:izabel_bowers@health.state.ak.us).

*Training and support for kinship foster parents:* Alaska contracts with private entities to provide training opportunities for all foster parents in the state. *Contact:* Izabel Bowers at (907) 465-2218 or [izabel\\_bowers@health.state.ak.us](mailto:izabel_bowers@health.state.ak.us).

## 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 payments may be available to children and their grandparents and other relative caregivers through the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP).

- 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 (907) 465-3347 or log on to [www.hss.state.ak.us](http://www.hss.state.ak.us).

**Food Stamps:** Based on the family’s income, kinship care families may also be eligible for food stamps to help meet food and nutrition needs. For more information about these programs, call (907) 465-3325 or log on to <http://www.hss.state.ak.us>.

**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 Denali KidCare program. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free or low-cost coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for Denali KidCare, call (888) 318-8890 or, in Anchorage, (907) 269-6529. Visit the Denali KidCare website at [www.hss.state.ak.us/dhcs/denalikidcare/default.htm](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dhcs/denalikidcare/default.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](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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Alaska currently does not have any additional state laws in effect specifically directed at kinship care families.

## 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.*