Across the United States, more than 6 million children are being raised in households headed by grandparents and other relatives as parents struggle with substance abuse, mental illness, incarceration, economic hardship, divorce, domestic violence, and other serious problems. These family members (or “kinship caregivers”) are caring for children both inside and outside the foster care system. This fact sheet provides information and resources to help with the challenges they face.

**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 New Hampshire, there are 10,119 children living in grandparent-headed households (3.3% of all the children in the state). There are another 2,339 children living in households headed by other relatives (.8% of all the children in the state).

**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 New Hampshire, 4,534 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [436 in Manchester]: 1% of these grandparents are African American; 3% are Hispanic/Latino; and 94% 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/confacts/grandparents/census2000.html.

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

- **Families First of the Greater Seacoast** offers family support for kinship caregivers in the Portsmouth area through parenting classes, support groups, and family outings. The support groups host professional speakers from the community to address the needs and concerns of kinship caregivers and give kinship caregivers the opportunity to share their experiences with others in the same situation. It meets twice monthly and provides child care, transportation, and a light supper during the support group meetings. **Contact:** Pam Mattingly, RAPP Coordinator, at (603) 422-8208 ext. 125, or pmattingly@communitycampus.org. The website is www.familiesfirstseacoast.org.

- **The Grandparents as Parents Support Group** is sponsored by ServiceLink New Hampshire and meets at the Center for Elder Services in Lebanon on the second Thursday of every month. **Contact:** Dana Michalovic, at (603) 448-1558.

- **Even Start**, sponsored by the Brookdale Foundation’s Relatives as Parent Program (RAPP), provides a number of services for kinship caregivers, mainly in Dover and Somersworth counties. Programs offered include support groups and social gatherings for kinship caregivers and their children. It also offers a reference book for kinship care families with information about local and federal programs and services. Even Start also has a legislative focus, recently testifying before the state legislature about housing problems facing caregivers. **Contact:** Nancy Kershaw, Even Start Program Coordinator, at (603) 749-9755.

- **Healthy Universal Beginnings (HUB) Family Support Center**, also sponsored by The Brookdale Foundation’s Relatives as Parent Program (RAPP), provides a diverse range of services for relative caregivers in Strafford County, including a bi-monthly Caregiver-to-Caregiver Support Group for kinship care families. The program also offers guest speakers to discuss legal, financial, social, and personal issues particular to caregivers, including personal adjustment to change, how to work with schools, and the basics of child and adolescent development. HUB also provides referrals for any services caregivers may need. **Contact:** Carol Sanderson, Parent Education Coordinator, at (603) 749-9754.

- **Family Matters in Carroll County** is a family resource center that provides advocacy, support, referrals, and information pertinent to families, including kinship caregivers. It offers a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support group that meets once a month in Ossipee. The organization also offers ongoing workshops on child and family issues for parents and caregivers and weekly caregiver/child playgroups in Center Ossipee and Moultonborough. Family Matters is also the Child Care Resource and Referral agency for Carroll County, providing information and referrals for child care, and technical assistance and training to child care providers and programs. **Contact:** Lynne Dennis, Family Resource/ Empowerment Coordinator, at (603) 539-8223, 1(800) 820-8138 or finicc@ncia.net.

- **The University of New Hampshire (UNH) Cooperative Extension** offers parenting education to kinship caregivers and others throughout the state through newsletters on infant and toddler care and development, workshops on child development and parenting issues, parenting fact sheets and publications, a website at http://www.ceinfo.unh.edu, and volunteers who provide parenting education. Videos of the national Extension network’s satellite conferences on the needs of grandparents raising grandchildren are available through UNH Cooperative Extension offices in each of the state’s 10 counties. **Contact:** Charlene Baxter, Program Leader, Family Development and Communities, UNH Cooperative Extension, at (603) 862-2485 or charlene.baxter@unh.edu.

- **New Hampshire Family Voices** is a Family-to-Family Health Information Center which supports families with special needs, emotional, physical, and chronic illnesses, and disabilities. The organization has a database of more than 3,000 resources on specific issues such as ADHD, Autism, etc. It also has a lending library with over
1,600 titles of books, videos, and audio tapes, and a support system specializing in information on raising children with chronic illnesses, disabilities and social issues, such as diversity and grandparenting a child with special needs. Family Voices publishes a quarterly newsletter of information and resources called “Pass It On.” It also assists families in understanding systems such as Medicaid, private insurance policies, SSI, and public and private financial assistance programs. Family Voices has a referral service offering information to kinship care families on local supports and services. **Contact:** Martha-Jean Madison, Co-Director, at (603) 271-4525 or 1-(800) 852-3345 x4525 (in state) or nhfv@yahoo.com. The organization’s website is www.nhfv.org.

- **AARP’s New Hampshire Office** offers statewide information and referrals for grandparents and other seniors raising children. **Contact:** Richard Chevrefils, at (603) 629-9559.

- **The Riverbend Parent-Child Centers** give infants and toddlers a high quality pre-school experience while their parents and caregivers learn and share effective parenting skills in Concord, Hillsborough, Franklin, Penacook and Pittsfield. The Centers offer a parenting course for grandparents and other relatives raising children. Kinship caregivers are also invited to join in parenting groups. Van transportation is available when necessary. **Contact:** Donna Raycraft, Director, at (603) 226-7505 ext. 3215, or draycraft@riverbendcmhc.org. You can also access the organization’s website at www.riverbendcmhc.org.

- **The Family Resource Connection** is a special service of the New Hampshire state library that provides information and materials for families, including kinship care families, on all aspects of raising children. It is a lending library, resource and referral center, and clearinghouse that mails materials to callers with postage-paid envelopes for their return. Among its collection are books and videos specifically for kinship care families. **Contact:** Alice Nye, Coordinator, at (603) 271-7931 or nyea@library.state.nh.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 New Hampshire, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division for Children, Youth and Families reports:

**Number of children in kinship care:** As of January 2002, 1,651 children were in out-of-home placements under DHHS’s supervision. Of these children, 160 children (10%) 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 DHHS’s care.

**Kinship care licensing:** Kin do not have to be licensed in New Hampshire to care for children, but they must be approved by DHSS’s Division of Children, Youth and Families. To be approved, kin must fill out the Kinship Interim Care (KIC) Checklist (also called a “Form 2273”) and participate, cooperate, and meet the requirements of the kinship care approval process. If kin wish to qualify as a fully-licensed foster family, they must meet the same requirements as non-kin. However, the agency may waive certain licensing requirements that are not related to the health and safety of the child. **Contact:** Gail DeGoosh, Foster Care Specialist, New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families at (603) 271-4711 or Gdegoosh@dhhs.state.nh.us.

**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. Most of these programs offer ongoing subsidies to children who have left foster care to live permanently under the legal custody or guardianship
State Laws

New Hampshire currently does not have any state laws in effect specifically directed at kinship care families.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship foster placements should be directed to Gail T. DeGoosh, Foster Care Specialist, New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families, at (603) 271-4711 or Gdegoosh@dhhs.state.nh.us.

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 New Hampshire’s Family Assistance Program (FAP).

- 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 FAP grant — based on their income and subject to work requirements and time limits.

Call (800) 852-3345 x 4580 or log on to www.dhhs.state.nh.us/.

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) 852-3345 x 4580 or log on to www.dhhs.state.nh.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 New Hampshire’s Healthy Kids Gold and Healthy Kids Silver programs. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for these programs, call 1(877) 464-2447 or log on to www.nhhealthykids.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 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 website at www.benefitscheckup.org.

State Laws

New Hampshire currently does not have any state laws in effect specifically directed at kinship care families.

National Resources

AARP Grandparent Information Center  (800) 424-3410  www.aarp.org/grandparents
Adoption Information Clearinghouse  (888) 251-0075  www.calib.com/naic/pubs/r_grand.cfm
The Brookdale Foundation Group  (212) 308-7355  www.brookdalefoundation.org
Child Welfare League of America  (202) 638-2952  www.cwla.org
Generations United  (202) 638-1263  www.gu.org
Fact sheets are updated once a year. Suggested additions should be emailed to the AARP Grandparent Information Center at gic@aarp.org. Please write “State Fact Sheets” in the subject line of your email.