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 Mexico, there are 41,085 children living in grandparent-headed households (8.1% of all the children in the state). There are another 10,572 children living in households headed by other relatives (2.1% 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 Mexico, 54,041 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [4,272 in Albuquerque]: 2% of these grandparents are African American; 53% are Hispanic/Latino; 20% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; and 23% are White. 30% 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

- **Advocates for Children and Families of Doña Ana County** has a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Center that serves local kinship care families. The organization is also developing a pilot program for the rest of the state. The center provides information and referrals, offers support groups, and sponsors social events for grandparents and grandchildren. **Contact:** Yolanda Borunda, Program Manager, at (505) 5250-1060, or grandp@zianet.com.

- **The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program of Outcomes, Inc.** offers an array of free and sliding scale-based classes and counseling for grandparent caregivers and the children they are raising in Albuquerque and surrounding areas. Trained staff help grandparents and parents work through issues of visitation and other areas of family disagreement. For grandchildren, there is a free 10-week psycho-educational program designed to improve self-esteem, overcome issues of abuse, abandonment or grief, improve communication, and develop other life skills. **Contact:** Jane Hurtz, Parent Craft Coordinator at (505) 243-2551.

- **GAIN (Grandparents Are Indeed Necessary)** advocates for grandparents rights, visitation and meets weekly in Albuquerque. **Contact:** Marilyn Schaer at (505) 296-3589.

- **The AARP of New Mexico** has hosted several Grandparent Forums to talk to grandparents about family, legal, financial, and community resources available to them. Local organizations are available at the forums to answer questions for grandparents. Free childcare is available for children ages 2-13. **Contact:** Stan Cooper, AARP State Director, at (505) 946-3601, or Scooper@aarp.org.

- **The GRO Project (Grandparents and Relatives Outreach Project)** of the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center is a case management model that serves grandparents and other relatives caring for children affected by pre-natal substance abuse, or children who are at an environmental risk including those who have been abused and neglected, or who are dealing with HIV, in Albuquerque. The project provides legal assistance, help in obtaining public benefits, a support group, primary health and pediatric clinics, and advocacy efforts. The group was also instrumental in getting New Mexico’s State Custody Assisted Guardianship Act passed and has helped to facilitate several conferences for grandparents. **Contact:** Bebeann Bouchard, Project Director, at (505) 272-3459 or bbouchard@salud.unm.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 New Mexico, the Children, Youth, and Families Department reports:

**Number of children in kinship care:** As of April 2002, there were 1,795 children in out-of-home placements. Of these children, 325 (18.27%) children 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 the Department’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. New Mexico has two
programs: Tribal Assisted Guardianship and State Custody Assisted Guardianship. Supported by federal funding, these “waiver” programs provide subsidies to kin and qualified non-related caregivers who obtain legal guardianship of children in tribal or state custody. Contact: Jeff Thompson, Title IV-E Program Manager, at (505) 827-8427 or jlthompson@cyfd.state.nm.us.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship foster care should be directed to Jean Taylor, Foster Parent Liaison, Children Youth & Families Department, at (800) 432-2075, or jtaylor@cyfd.state.nm.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 Mexico’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

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

Call (888) 473-3676 or log on to www.state.nm.us/hsd/isd.html.

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 1-888-473-3676 or log on to www.state.nm.us/hsd/isd.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 New MexiKids program. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free health coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for these programs, call 1-888-997-2583 or log on to www.state.nm.us/hsd/mad/Index.html.

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

The following state laws may be helpful to grandparents and other relatives raising children:

Medical Consent (N.M. Stat. Ann. § 24-10-2): This law allows a child’s parent or guardian to designate a third-party caregiver who does not have legal custody or guardianship to consent to medical care on behalf of a child.

Kinship Guardianship Act (N.M.S.A. § 40-10B1 – 40-10-B15): This law allows a relative or other caregiver to petition for guardianship of a child who has been left behind by a parent and in care for another for 90 consecutive days.

1Laws 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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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tr>
<td>AARP Grandparent Information Center</td>
<td>(800) 424-3410</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aarp.org/grandparents">www.aarp.org/grandparents</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption Information Clearinghouse</td>
<td>(888) 251-0075</td>
<td><a href="http://www.calib.com/naic/pubs/r_grand.cfm">www.calib.com/naic/pubs/r_grand.cfm</a></td>
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<td>The Brookdale Foundation Group</td>
<td>(212) 308-7355</td>
<td><a href="http://www.brookdalefoundation.org">www.brookdalefoundation.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Welfare League of America</td>
<td>(202) 638-2952</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cwla.org">www.cwla.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Generations United</td>
<td>(202) 638-1263</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gu.org">www.gu.org</a></td>
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<td>Grand Parent Again</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.grandparentagain.com">www.grandparentagain.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>GrandsPlace</td>
<td>(860) 763-5789</td>
<td><a href="http://www.grandsplace.com">www.grandsplace.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>National Aging Information Center</td>
<td>(202) 619-0724</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov">www.aoa.dhhs.gov</a></td>
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<td>National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights</td>
<td>(866) 624-9900</td>
<td><a href="http://www.grandparentsforchildren.org">www.grandparentsforchildren.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Urban Institute</td>
<td>(202) 833-7200</td>
<td><a href="http://www.urban.org">www.urban.org</a></td>
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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.