



SOUTH CAROLINA



A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

October 2003

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 South Carolina, there are 90,866 children living in grandparent-headed households (9.0% of all the children in the state). There are another 21,178 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 South Carolina, 51,755 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [1,073 in North Charleston and 944 in Charleston]: 55% of these grandparents are African American; 1% are Hispanic/Latino; and 42% 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 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.

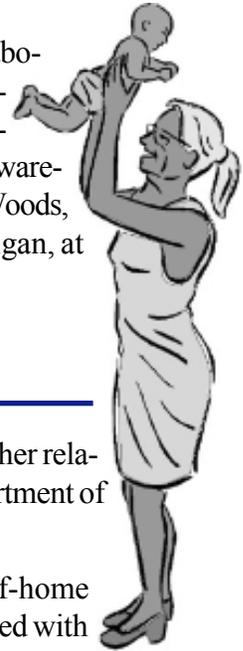
* These data are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2. Profile Selected Social Characteristics:2000.

The Brookdale Foundation



Programs That Can Help

- **South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Senior Services** provides relative caregivers referrals to resources in their local communities. The Department also provides support group services to the northern section of the state and is developing a kinship care resource directory that will provide statewide information. *Contact:* Terri Whirrett, Intergenerational Coordinator, at (800) 898-9095 or whirrett@dhhs.state.sc.us.
- **Parents Anonymous** is a non-profit organization that offers support to parents and kinship caregivers. Parents Anonymous offers support groups for relative caregivers in Goosecreek. These groups also provide kinship care families with information and referrals to local resources. *Contact:* Sharon Dean, Program Director, at (843) 747-0480 or paofsc@aol.com.
- **Pee Dee Community Action Agency Head Start** has a “Kin Folks Program” which has collaborated with community partners and program members to develop a guide for parenting education training. “Kin Folks” who are unemployed or unable to return to work are encouraged to participate in daily Head Start activities with the children. This program increases awareness of information and benefits to help strengthen kinship care families. *Contact:* Kathryn Woods, Head Start Director, at (843) 678-3414 or iamkswoods@aol.com, and Eleanora Hennigan, at (843) 676-8521 or hennigane@yahoo.com.



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 South Carolina, the Department of Social Services, Division of Foster Care Licensing reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of March 2001, there were 4,820 children in out-of-home placements under Department’s care. Of these children, approximately 250 (5%) 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 requirements 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 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 of relatives. South Carolina currently does not have a subsidized guardianship program.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship foster care placements should be directed to Jackie Kasufkin, South Carolina Department of Social Services, Division of Foster Care Licensing, at (803) 898-7254 or lkasufkin@dss.state.sc.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 the Optional State Supplementation (OSS) 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 (803) 898-2500 or log on to www.dhhsstatesc.us/offices/long_term_care/oss/osshtm.

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 (803) 898-2500 or log on to www.dhhs.state.sc.us/offices/long_term_care/oss/osshtm.

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 South Carolina’s Partners for Healthy Children program. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid. For more information about Partner’s for Healthy Children, call (888) 549-0820 or log on to www.dhhs.state.sc.us/FAQ/children.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 website at www.benefitscheckup.org.



State Laws

The following state law may be helpful to grandparents and other relatives raising children¹:

Educational Enrollment (S.C. Code Ann. § 59-63-32): This law allows an adult caring for a child to enroll the child in school by signing an affidavit confirming that the child’s residency in the district is not primarily related to attending a particular school in the district and that the adult accepts responsibility for the child’s educational decisions, including receiving discipline notices, attending conferences, and giving permission to participate in school activities.

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	(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

Children’s Defense Fund	(202) 628-8787	www.childrensdefense.org
Generations United	(202) 638-1263	www.gu.org
Grand Parent Again		www.grandparentagain.com
GrandsPlace	(860) 763-5789	www.grandsplace.com
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 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.