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.

**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 Michigan, there are 143,523 children living in grandparent-headed households (5.5% of all children in the state). There are another 40,098 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.5% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Michigan, 71,200 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 Michigan, 70,044 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [17,086 in Detroit]: 36% of these grandparents are African American; 4% are Hispanic/Latino; 1% are Asian; and 55% are White. 33% of these grand-parents 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/families/grandparents/.

* These data are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2. Profile Selected Social Characteristics: 2000.
• The Michigan Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) has established a Relatives as Parents Program Statewide Initiative. Through this initiative, the OSA works collaboratively with other state agencies and local communities to support kinship care families. In addition to other activities, the Initiative has helped to establish new and expand existing kinship care services, including support and respite services and local resource guides for kinship caregivers. Kinship care information is available on a county-by-county basis. Contact: Bonnie Graham, Field Services Supervisor, at (517) 373-9360 or grahambon@michigan.gov.

• The Kinship Care Resource Center serves the entire state of Michigan. Services for relative caregivers include a toll-free hotline to answer legal questions and provide information and referrals related to finances, support groups, and other community resources. The Resource Center works with agencies to do technical assistance and training, program development, and grant writing. It provides workshops and is organizing a conference for both caregivers and agency professionals statewide. Legislative and coalition task forces help grandparent caregivers become active advocates. The program also provides written information on support group curricula, workshops, and an information booklet for kinship caregivers that includes resources listed by county. Contact: Ama Agyemang, MSW, Coordinator, at (517) 355-9600 or kinship@msu.edu. You can also call the Hotline at (800) 535-1218.

• Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County sponsors the Grandparents as Parents Program (GAP), using an empowerment model which provides support and education to grandparents and other relatives caring for children through twice monthly support groups in 5 sites throughout the county, home visits and a monthly newsletter. The newsletter includes parenting and self-care tips as well as information on group activities. Caregivers receive referrals for basic needs (such as food, clothing, financial assistance), and other support services (legal services, kinship adoption assistance, counseling, mentors). An “unmet needs” fund provides financial help to caregivers 60 years of age and over. Contact: Virginia Boyce, Program Coordinator, at (734) 712-3625 or vboyce@csswashtenaw.org.

• The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and Relatives as Parents Program serves Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties through the Region IV Area Agency on Aging, Inc. The program offers monthly telephone support groups via conference calls with speakers from local agencies and organizations. Other opportunities for caregivers to get together are offered at least once a month in each county. A local kinship care resource directory and library materials are available on loan. “Family Fun Events” are held approximately every four months for caregivers and children. Child care and mileage reimbursement are provided for meetings and events. A newsletter for caregivers is produced every other month. Caregivers seeking information and referrals for legal, financial, parenting, educational, and health assistance can call the warm-line toll-free at (877) 660-2725 or (269) 983-7058. Contact: Camellia Pisegna, Director, at (269) 983-7058 or email camelliapisegna@areaagencyonaging.org.

• Legal Hotline: Michigan residents who are 60 years and older can receive free legal advice from four attorneys staffing the statewide legal hotline. The hotline addresses kinship care issues, in addition to general legal issues affecting seniors. The toll-free number is (800) 347-5297 for Michigan residents.

• The Macomb County Department of Senior Citizens’ Grandparents Raising Grandchildren offers several programs for grandparents and other relative caregivers. Services include support groups, family activities, educational speakers, holiday parties, and agency referrals. All program offerings are free of charge. Contact: Kathleen Bayer or Mary Potts, Kinship Care Coordinators, at (586) 469-3615 or email Kathleen.bayer@macombcountymi.gov or Mary.Potts@macombcountymi.gov.

• The Grandparents and Other Relatives as Parents Program provides support services for kinship care families in Jackson County. Services include assistance in finding community resources, assistance with guardianship and/or adoption, family and parenting education, a lending library, family activities and events, and a weekly support group for adults and children. There are no minimum age requirements for participation in the program. Contact: Jennifer Guthrie, MSW at (517) 788-4364 or jguthrie@co.jackson.mi.us.
• **The Grandparent Resource Center of Life Guidance Services** offers a six-week support group, three or four times a year for grandparents in Western Michigan only. Child care and dinner are provided during the support group meetings. There is a grandchildren’s group for children between the ages of seven and twelve. An adolescent support group is also available. The Center also publishes a quarterly newsletter, which contains information on special events, legal and legislative issues, and other agency news. The Center offers a warm-line Monday through Friday at (616) 774-0633. A monthly group meeting with program alumni helps the administration plan for new topics, bring speakers, and simply get together and catch up. Referrals are made to a variety of community resources within Western Michigan. You can log on to www.lifeguidanceservices.org. **Contact:** Kelley Worth, Clinical Social Worker Therapist, at (616) 774-0633 or kworth@lifeguidanceservices.org.

• **Project GUIDE** operates through the Harper-Gratiot Multi-Service Center and seeks to improve the health and welfare of grandfamilies. The primary service offered is specialized respite care in the community. The program goals include stimulating positive communication habits between members of intergenerational families, reducing the social isolation faced by some grandparents raising grandchildren, and providing care and support for community’s grandfamilies. The program also provides weekly support group meetings, family life education, advocacy, transportation, recreational activities and retreats. **Contact:** Jerutha Kennedy, Unit Director, at (313) 923-5050 or jkennedy@nso-mi.org.

• **Spaulding for Children** provides a variety of services to kinship caregivers within the agency and the community. Some of the services include monthly support group meetings, adoption services, youth programs, and information on permanency options. The program also organizes several social activities for caregivers including picnics or dinners while providing day care for their children. **Contact:** Karen Hinton, Project Leader, at (248) 443-0300 or khinton@spaulding.org.

• **The Elder Law Center** of Wayne County Neighborhood Legal Services, has a Caregivers’ Program which provides legal assistance, information and guidance to caregivers, including grandparent and other relative caregivers, 60 years and older. The Program provides legal services, information, and referrals for guardianships and medical assistance. Legal services are provided to grandparent caregivers, regardless of age, who reside in Redford and Canton Townships. The program also provides elder abuse education. **Contact:** Linda White, Office Manager, at (313) 937-8291 or lwhite@arounddetroit.biz.

• **The Grandparent Support Program of the Adult Well-Being Services** offers comprehensive supports and services for grandparents and other relatives over age 50 caring for related children. Supports and services include six to eight weeks of information sessions and an education series. Once the education series is completed, participants are invited to attend monthly support meetings. Monthly family group meetings for kinship caregivers and the children they are caring for and a “teenage granddaughters” meeting is also offered. Social workers are also available to provide case management services, and substance abuse and parenting information are available. In-home respite care and mental health services for caregivers are also available. Activities for the children are provided, including tutoring and outings to local events and exhibits. Respite care services are limited to Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park, but other services may be available to caregivers in other parts of Southeast Michigan (call to determine eligibility). **Contact:** Lorraine Person, Social Service Worker, at (313) 924-7860.

• **The Second Time Around Program**, provided through the Michigan State University Extension, is a support program for grandparents raising grandchildren. Grandparents are invited to participate in an eight-week, curriculum-based information series. After completing the series, grandparents have the option of participating in monthly support groups and monthly educational workshops. Child care is provided during meeting times, and there is a lending library for grandparents and grandchildren. Second Time Around also has a monthly newsletter, and offers family events (such as holiday parties and picnics) a few times a year. The program is open to grandparents in Kalamazoo County and the surrounding counties in Southwest Michigan. Volunteer opportunities are also available to grandparents interested in being on an advisory or a legislative action council. Log on to www.kalcounty.com/msue/grand. **Contact:** Joyce Stout, Coordinator, (269) 384-8054 or stoutj@msu.edu.
• The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in Adrian holds support group meetings each Thursday. Funded by the Lenawee Department of Aging, the program also organizes grandparents appreciation picnics and provides “camperships” to allow grandchildren the opportunity to go to summer camp and also provides grandparents with respite. Parenting classes are available to the grandfamilies and a conference camp is run once a year. Therapists are available for meetings. Contact: Sharon Guild, Founder/Director, (517) 264-5320 or email guild@frontiernet.net.

• The Copper County Mental Health Services Institute offers the Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) with funding from the Brookdale Foundation. The program facilitates support groups, conducts information sessions, and identifies community resources for grandparents and other relatives raising children. The goal is to encourage and promote the creation/expansion of community-based services for relative caregivers and to enhance the capacity of community agencies to respond to the needs of kin caregivers and their families. Contact: Marja Salani at (906) 482-4880 or msalani@theinst.org.

• Kinship Care Support Services offers assistance to kinship care families residing in Saginaw County. The program has a monthly newsletter and two support groups each week with child care. The program also provides a monthly group for teen girls called “Girl Talk” and a free summer camp for girls between 12 and 17. Families also receive support through information and referrals to community resources, case management services, respite, and free recreational events. Contact: Janelle Steckley at (989) 797-6884 or jsteckley@saginawcounty.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 Michigan, the Bureau of Child and Family Services of the Family Independence Agency reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of June 2005, the Bureau of Child and Family Services had a total of 17,342 children in out-of-home placements. Of these children, 6,692 were placed with relatives.

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 Bureau’s care.

Kinship care licensing: In Michigan, some kinship care providers must meet the same licensing standards as non-kin foster parents. Once kin are licensed, they are eligible to receive a foster care payment. Other kinship care providers must meet assessment standards that are different than those for non-kin. Once they meet the assessment standards, they are eligible to receive a Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) child-only grant.

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 of relatives. Michigan currently does not have a subsidized guardianship program.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship care foster placements should be directed to Mary Chaliman at (517) 335-4652 or chalimanm2@michigan.gov.

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 Family Independence Program (FIP).

• 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 (517) 373-2035, e-mail questions to fiaweb@michigan.gov, or log on to www.michigan.gov/fia.

Food Stamps: Kinship care families may also be eligible for the Food Assistance Program to help meet their children’s food and nutrition needs. For more information, call (517) 373-2035, e-mail questions to fiaweb@michigan.gov, or log on to www.michigan.gov/fia.

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 Healthy Kids or MIChild. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid. Children receiving assistance through a Child Only Grant from the Independence Agency are automatically eligible for coverage through Healthy Kids. For more information about how to apply for Healthy Kids or MIChild, call (888) 988-6300 or log on to www.michigan.gov/mdch.

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

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

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 |
| Generations United | (202) 289-3979 | www.gu.org |
| 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 quarterly. 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.