



# NEW YORK

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.

## 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 York, there are 297,239 children living in grandparent-headed households (6.3% of all the children in the state). There are another 111,806 children living in households headed by other relatives (6.3 % of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in New York, 165,493 are living there without either parent present.

### The Grandparents

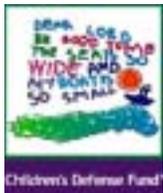
- Nationally, 2.4 million grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them: 29% of these grandparents are African American; 17% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3% are Asian; and 47% are White. 34% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 71% are under the age of 60; 19% live in poverty.
- In New York, 143,014 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [83,946 in New York City]: 34% of these grandparents are African American; 26% are Hispanic/Latino; 5% are Asian; and 31% are White. 28% 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](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.

The Brookdale Foundation



## Programs That Can Help

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- ***The New York State Office for the Aging*** serves as a focal point for the development of programs and information for grandparents and kin caring for children. Through the Office's Targeted Caregiver Initiative (TCI), 27 local offices for aging have received seed grants to work in collaboration with community-based organizations to develop support groups, resources, and information and referrals for grandparents and other relatives raising children. The Office continues to maintain its webpage with up-to-date information for kinship care families and addresses e-mail requests from across the country by individual grandparent caregivers and the organizations that serve them. *Contact:* Carmen Cunningham, Director of Targeting Services & Equal Opportunity Programs, New York State Office for the Aging, at (518) 473-4275 or [Carmen.cunningham@ofa.state.ny.us](mailto:Carmen.cunningham@ofa.state.ny.us).
- ***The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)*** remains committed to assisting kinship caregivers and the children in their care. A number of community-based organizations are funded throughout the state using a variety of funding streams that provide support services such as counseling, information, and referrals. In conjunction with other state agencies, OCFS plays a role in shaping kinship care policy and implementing recent legislation designed to strengthen the rights of grandparents. In addition, OCFS continues to provide accurate information on kinship care to family courts, legislators, local social service districts and caregivers in need of assistance. *Contact:* Robert Resnick, Project Coordinator, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, at (516) 402-6775 or [Robert.resnick@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:Robert.resnick@dfa.state.ny.us).
- ***The National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights (NCGCR)*** is a national coalition consisting of individuals and group membership. In New York, the NCGCR partners with other grandparent groups and organizations to hold state rallies in support of the passage of effective legislation for grandparents and children. The NCGCR's toll-free number at (866) 624-9900 provides information to grandparents who are advocating for their grandchildren. Information consists of current federal and state caselaw as well as entitlements and services available to grandparents in New York and around the country. *Contact:* Brigitte Castellano, Executive Director, at (866) 624-9900 or [bcastellano@grandparentsforchildren.org](mailto:bcastellano@grandparentsforchildren.org).
- ***The New York City Department for the Aging Grandparent Resource Center (GRC)*** provides information, assistance, case management and counseling to kinship care families in the New York City area. The GRC has established support group coalitions in each borough based on the Brooklyn Grandparents Coalition model. The Manhattan, Bronx, and Queens coalitions offer support groups, case management, training, and recreational activities.

With a grant from the New York State Office for the Aging, the New York City Department for Aging developed its first curriculum: *For Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: A Series of Workshops to Help You COPE*. In addition, the GRC has developed a second curriculum and offers it and the following resource guides for free:

*For Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: More Help for You and Your Family (curriculum)*

*The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Book: Skipped Generation Family Support Group Guide*

*Grandparent Resource Center Directory of Supportive Services*

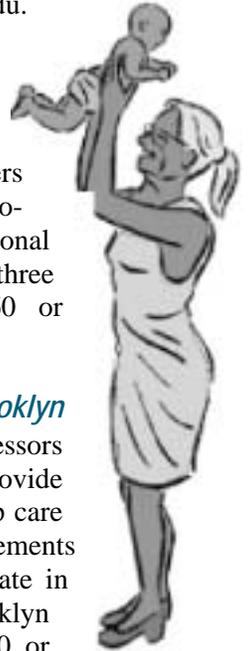
The Grandparent Resource Center provides ongoing technical support to grandparent support groups throughout New York City through a Support Group Facilitators Network. Community groups are also able to request Grandparent Information Forums focusing on issues pertinent to grandparent caregivers such as: health care for the grandchildren, kinship foster care and legal issues. Trainings are offered through the development of a new education series via video teleconferencing entitled "Lunch and Learn" and through government EAP programs lunch hour series.

The GRC is developing a curriculum to train government agencies on the needs of grandparent caregivers. Through National Family Caregiver Support Funds, the GRC provides support to Fordham University's Grandparent Empowerment Training; New York City KinCare Task Force, the New York Committee for Kinship Family Care, and funds a citywide grandparent program at The Family Center. The Family Center provides comprehensive legal and social services to grandparent caregiver families. *Contact:* Rolanda Pyle, Director, at (212) 442-1094 or



rplye@aging.nyc.gov; Cheryl Jackson, Deputy Director, at (212) 442-1071 or cjackson@aging.nyc.gov.

- ***The Cornell Cooperative Extension*** in Orange County hosts monthly peer support groups in both English and Spanish, education series and trainings to learn new parenting and advocacy skills, and counseling services. The Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) provides resources and referrals to appropriate community services, including mediation, legal consultation, financial management, and school advocacy. A youth development component, called 4-H RAPP, is designed to meet the recreational, developmental, and emotional support needs of children being raised by kin. *Contact:* Brenda Reynolds, RAPP Coordinator, at (845) 344-12234 or br23@cornell.edu.
- ***Second Time Around Parents for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children*** is an educational and support group that meets each month at the Cooperative Extension Center in Canandaigua. Scheduled speakers, coffee and conversation, respite, family activities, warmline, printed resource, lending library, networking, and 4-H club for 5 to 12-year-old grandchildren are also available. *Contact:* Isabelle Doran Jensen, Extension Resource Education, Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Ontario County, at (585) 394-3977 (ext. 23) or idj1@cornell.edu.
- ***The Brooklyn Grandparents' Coalition*** originated in 1994 to increase social interaction and networking among relative caregivers; increase their knowledge about legal, health care, education, financial, and parenting issues; and decrease depression and isolation. Currently, the Coalition is comprised of 12 agencies that provide services and support groups to kinship caregivers in Brooklyn, New York. Through its collaborative partnership, the Coalition holds psycho-educational forums for relative caregivers, a multi-cultural holiday party, and summer recreational events. The Coalition also writes and distributes a newsletter on relevant topics of caregivers three times year. *Contact:* Dr. Deborah Langosch, Coalition Chairperson, at (212) 632-4760 or dlangosch@jbfc.org.
- ***The Kinship Care Program (KCP) at the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services Brooklyn Clinic*** in Coney Island was developed to provide comprehensive services to reduce the many stressors that caregivers face when raising their relative children. The KCP was designed to provide psychological, case management, information and referrals, legal and advocacy services to kinship care families. A weekly support group, individual and family therapy, assistance with accessing entitlements and benefits, and phone liaison with legal services are available. Caregivers can also participate in educational forums and recreational events through the KCP's affiliation with the Brooklyn Grandparents Coalition. *Contact:* Dr. Deborah Langosch, Program Director, at (212) 632-4760 or dlangosch@jbfc.org.
- ***The Kinship Care Resource Network*** offers support groups and services to kinship care families in the Rochester area. The groups holds workshops that are designed to provide grandparents with access to services and information that will help them adapt to the many facets of caring for children. The Kinship Care Resource Network also offers specialized support groups for grandparents raising grandchildren with disabilities, and for the grandchildren who are being raised by their grandparents. The Network also provides assistance and advocacy for grandparents in applying for guardianship child-only TANF grants and SSI for their grandchildren. In addition, we provide monthly home visits for kinship care families from birth to age 5 through the Parents as Teachers home visiting program. Refreshments and child care are provided. *Contact:* Linda James, Program Coordinator, at (585) 436-0370 ext. 12 or ljames@frcr.org.
- ***Catholic Family Center*** received a three-year grant from the Administration on Aging in 2001 and a TANF grant from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, to develop a comprehensive, coordinated system for delivering supportive services to kinship caregivers. The services include information and referral, education, counseling, social supports, support groups, legal assistance, financial counseling, case management, respite and individual and systemic advocacy for the kinship caregivers. Children & youth programming includes asset-building activities for children and youth (workshops, discussion groups, field trips) as well as support groups. The Center also offers Intergenerational Youth Forums and a camp for kinship caregivers and children. The Catholic Family Center has also collaborated with many local organizations to form the Kinship Care Resource Network. *Contact:* Mary Penet, Program Manager, at (585) 262-7104 or mpenet@cfcrochetser.org.



- ***The Salvation Army Grandparent Enrichment Program (SAGE)*** provides a weekly support group and activities. Speakers are invited to address a variety of topics that include legal issues for relative caregivers, understanding diversity, domestic violence, healthy eating, handling stress, family literacy, and internet for seniors. *Contact:* Carmelita Gary at (716) 888-6224.
- ***The Children of Alcoholics Foundation*** provides education, information and resources to children and families affected by alcoholism and other substance abuse problems. The services offered include a website with more than 80 pages of resources for children, adults, and professionals, an active listserv and informational brochures. The Ties That Bind program supports kinship caregivers in situations of parental substance abuse, and includes a training guide and related materials for caregivers and professionals. *Contact:* Kim Sumner Mayer, Kinship Care Outreach Manager, at (212) 595-5810 or ksumner-mayer@phoenixhouse.org. The web site is [www.coaf.org/family/caregivers/kinmain.htm](http://www.coaf.org/family/caregivers/kinmain.htm).
- ***The Caregivers Respite Program of Catholic Charities*** provides a variety of services to grandparents and other relatives raising children in Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Fulton, Greene, Herkimer, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren and Washington Counties. The services provided include support groups, respite services for children and caregivers, and limited material support for non-recurring needs. *Contact:* Kathy Kavanaugh, Program Director, at (518) 449-2001 or [kathyk@ccalbany.org](mailto:kathyk@ccalbany.org).
- ***The Community Agency for Senior Citizens, Inc.*** in Staten Island provides comprehensive services to older adults, including grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren. These services include support groups and information about accessing financial assistance. In particular, the agency reaches out to grandparents and other relative caregivers through outreach in the local schools. *Contact:* Vicky King, Caregiver Coordinator, at (718) 981-6226.
- ***The Cornell University Cooperative Extension*** in Tioga County provides a variety of support and education programs for grandparents and other relative caregivers, including support groups at the Waverly and Owego Family Resource Centers, a RAPP resource library, referrals to community resources, family social activities, and *Parenting A Second Time Around*, a six week curriculum for grandparents raising grandchildren. *Contact:* Judy Wolf, RAPP Coordinator, at (607) 687-4020 or [jrw19@cornell.edu](mailto:jrw19@cornell.edu).
- ***The Dunbar Association, Inc.***, a youth development organization in Syracuse, offers an array of support and referral services for grandparents and other relatives raising children including support groups and counseling designed to help families with coping and healing. *Contact:* Dwight Rhodes, Director, Community Services-Family Services, at (315) 476-4269 or [dunbarfamsvc@aol.com](mailto:dunbarfamsvc@aol.com).
- ***The Elder Support Program at Family Services, Inc.*** in Poughkeepsie provides services free of charge to seniors who are isolated and homebound or at risk of abuse, exploitation or self-neglect. The Program also offers a monthly support group for grandparents and other relatives raising children and several guest speakers that provide educational resources for the families. *Contact:* Maria-Anne Duncan, at (845) 452-1110 (ext. 3413) or [mduncan@familyservicesny.org](mailto:mduncan@familyservicesny.org).
- ***The Fort Green Strategic Neighborhood Action Partnership's Grandparent Caregiver Program's*** mission is to be a voice for relative caregivers and the children they are raising in Clinton Hill, Farragut, Fulton Ferry, Pratt Area, Vinegar Hill and their surrounding communities. The Program provides support groups, activities, and information about and access to a computer lab. *Contact:* Georgianna Glose at (718) 694-6957 or [ftg\\_snap@hotmail.com](mailto:ftg_snap@hotmail.com).
- ***The Utica Kin Caregivers Support Network*** at the Municipal Housing Authority of the City of Utica provides a variety of services and supports to grandparents and other relatives raising children including a successful support group, a client-needs assessment system, delivery of case management services, legal education seminars, enrollment of children in supportive service programs, and referral through the Community Network Coalition. *Contact:* John Furman at (315) 735-3362 (ext. 34) or Dave Zogby at (315) 735-2755.
- ***The Westside Crime Prevention Program*** serves grandparents and other relatives and the children they are serving on the Upper West Side. In addition to a support group, the program offers resource and referrals, legal education, social events, and information about a variety of locally available resources. *Contact:* Kisha Skinner, RAPP Coordinator, at (212) 866-8603 or [skinnerwcpp@nyc.rr.com](mailto:skinnerwcpp@nyc.rr.com).

- *The New York Legal Assistance Group's (NYLAG) KinCare Project* offers legal services to eligible grandparents and other relatives raising children. Legal services include help with Family Court and Surrogate Court proceedings as well as representation in administrative and fair hearings, custody, child support, visitation, and public assistance. *Contact:* Shoshana Eisenberg, RAPP Coordinator, at (212) 613-5022 or [seisenberg@nylag.org](mailto:seisenberg@nylag.org) or Tamara Steckler at (212) 613-5020 or [tsteckler@nylag.org](mailto:tsteckler@nylag.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 New York, The Office of Children & Family Services reports:

*Number of children in kinship care:* As of September 2004, there were 31,241 children in out-of-home placements. Of these children, 6,339 children were placed with kin.

*Preferences for kinship care:* State law requires that kin be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought for a child under the Office’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 York does not currently have a subsidized guardianship program.



*State kinship care contact:* Questions about kinship care should be directed to Jamie Greenberg, Program Specialist, New York Office of Children & Family Services, (518) 473-1327 or e-mail: [jamie.greenberg@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:jamie.greenberg@dfa.state.ny.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 assistance may be available to children and their grandparents and other relative caregivers through the New York Family Assistance (FA) 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 (800) 342-3009 or log on to [www.otda.state.ny.us](http://www.otda.state.ny.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) 342-3009 or log on to [www.otda.state.ny.us](http://www.otda.state.ny.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 New York Medicaid and Child Health Plus programs. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free health coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for Medicaid, call (800) 342-3334 or log on to [www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us) and click on “Directory Services.” For more information about Child Health Plus, call (800) 698-4KIDS or log on to [www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us).

**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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The following state laws may be helpful to grandparents and other relatives raising children<sup>1</sup>:

**Medical Consent to Immunizations and Emergency Medical Care (N.Y. Pub. Health Law § 2504):** This law enables grandparents, an adult aunt or uncle, adult brother or sister, or non-relatives acting in a parental relationship to consent to the immunization of a child. Medical, dental, health, and hospital services may be rendered to persons of any age without the consent of a parent or legal guardian when, in the physician’s judgment an emergency exists and the person is in immediate need of medical attention and an attempt to secure consent would result in delay of treatment which would increase the risk to the person’s life or health.

**Standby Guardianship (N.Y. Surr. Ct. Proc. Act § 1726):** This law allows a progressively, chronically, or irreversibly ill parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian to designate an alternate or “standby guardian” of a child. This law may also apply to primary caretakers, under certain circumstances and with court approval. The standby guardian will become effective upon the incapacity, debilitation or death of the child’s parent/legal guardian legal custodian/ primary caretaker or upon the consent of the parent.

**Grandparent Rights (S. 224-A and A.8302-B):** This legislation provides grandparents with standing in custody proceedings involving their grandchildren when the parent and child have been separated for at least 24 continuous months and the child resides in the grandparent’s household. In addition, the legislation requires social service districts to locate grandparents and inform them that they are eligible to become foster parents and have the opportunity to adopt before their grandchildren are placed in the foster care system.

**Grandparents Rights Act (NY Dom. Rel. Law 72, Chapter 657):** This law defines how long a grandchild must reside with a grandparent before a grandparent is able to seek legal custody. If a child has resided for two or more years in a grandparent’s home, judges must decide legal custody based on the best interests of the child. The law also provides that social service departments must find all grandparents and inform them of their options when child protective services removes a child from his or her parents’ home. Once located, these grandparents and any other known relatives must be told that: (1) they may qualify as foster parents; (2) they may become legal custodians or guardianship independent of the foster care system; and (3) their failure to intervene may ultimately result in adoption by an unrelated foster family.

<sup>1</sup>Laws 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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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.*

