



PENNSYLVANIA



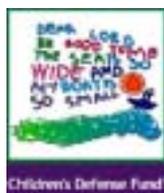
A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

September 2005

The Brookdale Foundation

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 Pennsylvania, there are 164,354 children living in grandparent-headed households (5.6 % of all children in the state). There are another 37,499 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.3 % of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Pennsylvania, 76,356 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 Pennsylvania, 80,423 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [21,123 in Philadelphia]: 28% of these grandparents are African American; 6% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are Asian; and 62% are White. 35% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present.

Additional Information

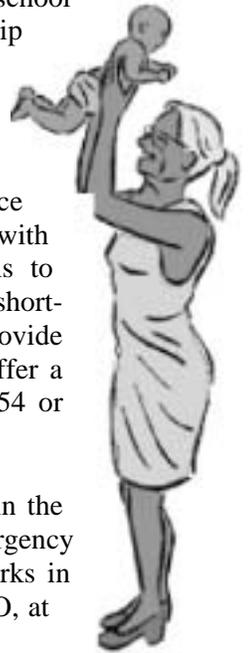
- United States Census data on grandparents who are responsible for meeting the basic needs of their grandchildren can also be broken down by county, congressional district, and other categories. Log on to factfinder.census.gov. Additional data on grandparents and grandchildren are available at www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/grandparents.html.
- Additional national and state data on grandparents raising children is available on AARP's website at www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/.

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



Programs That Can Help

- **The Pennsylvania Department of Aging** has contracted with the Penn State Cooperative Extension, Penn State University and Generations Together at the University of Pittsburgh to develop a series of kinship care information sheets with primary focus of grandparents raising grandchildren. The fact sheets have been completed and are available on the website at www.aging.state.pa.us. *Contact:* Kelly Allen, RAPP Program Director, at (717) 783-6207 or keallen@state.pa.us.
- **The Philadelphia Task Force on Kinship Care** advocates for new policies, laws, and services that support kinship care families on a local, state, and national level. It was established in March 1995 to implement the recommendations generated by a national conference in November 1993, *Kinship Care: Across Generations... Across Systems*. Task Force membership is drawn from the family court, the county agencies, kinship foster care provider agencies, grassroots support groups, senior agencies, a youth advocacy agency, child advocates, political staffs of the school district, and kinship caregivers. The Task Force also raises awareness and understanding of kinship care. *Contact:* Rebecca Baehr at (215) 925-1913 extension #158 or rebeccab@advokid.org.
- **Grand Central** is one of the nation's most comprehensive resource centers for grandparents and other relatives raising children with a bank of neighborhood, city, and national resources for legal, legislative, housing, physical and mental health and social services assembled within several resource guides for providers and families. Caregivers are provided on-on-one and peer support, assistance with appointments, paperwork completion, kinship care services, and specific resource and referrals to community-based services. Those families needing ongoing assistance become part of the agency's short-term caseload for support. Grand Central has established a comprehensive network of partners to provide public information and education, develop support groups and community-based resources, and offer a variety of programs and activities. *Contact:* Sandra Cross, Executive Director, at (215) 557-1554 or grandcentralinc@msn.com.
- **Children's Choice, Inc.** provides community-based, specialized services to children and families in the Philadelphia area. The agency's Kinship Care Program provides intensive casework services, emergency on-call support, and extensive training opportunities to kinship caregivers. Children's Choice works in cooperation with the Philadelphia Department of Human Services. *Contact:* Carolyn Eberwein, CEO, at (610) 521-6270 or 1-800-LA-CHILD or caechoice@aol.com.
- **The Office of Community Family Support** helps prevent child abuse and neglect and fosters family stability through exemplary neighborhood programs that target the most vulnerable children and families, including kinship care families. Philadelphia's 19 Family Centers provide one-stop access to a range of social services. Each Family Center offers six core services designed to help strengthen the family's capacity to reach the goals that have been set for their children and community. These include case management, information, referral and linkage, parenting education, after-school programs, summer programs, and positive youth development activities. *Contact:* Ellen Walker, Administrator of the Office of Community Family Support, at (215) 683-4DHS or (215) 683-4006 or ellen.walker@phila.gov.
- **The Senior LAW Center** provides advocacy, legal representation, advice, information, and referral services for kinship caregivers 60 years of age and older in Philadelphia. It also offers community education and training for grandparents and other relatives who are raising their kin. *Contact:* Karen C. Buck, Executive Director, at (215) 988-1244 or kbuck@seniorlawcenter.org. The website is www.seniorlawcenter.org.
- **The Grandkin Raising GrandKids Program** is an intergenerational studies program at the University of Pittsburgh serving kinship care families in the Pittsburgh area. The program offers grandparent support groups, a warm-line, at (412)-641-4546 or (800) 641-4546 (outside Allegheny County), that offers advice and support, and respite care in partnership with A Second Chance, Inc., the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Office of Children, Youth & Families, the Area Agency on Aging, Family Resources, Inc., and Vintage, Inc. *Contact:* Merrille Weissman, Program Director, Generations Together/University of Pittsburgh, at (412) 648-7099 or merrilw@pitt.edu.



- *The Center for Intergenerational Learning at Temple University-Grandma's Kids* provides after-school services to children in Philadelphia who are in out-of-home placements (kinship, foster care, group homes, etc.). The primary goal of Grandma's Kids is to enhance the capacity of children to resist substance abuse and violence, while strengthening the family system and improving the ability of school personnel to address the needs of this very special population. The primary population is elementary school children, ages 7 to 12. The programs are housed in the schools where Family Centers have offices. The programs offer tutorial assistance, life skills, and educational enhancement lessons, cultural and recreational activities, group counseling, and caregiver assistance support. *Contact:* Joy Woods-Jones, Project Coordinator, at (215) 204-3105 or joyjones@temple.edu.
- *Challenges, Options in Aging* offers a free monthly support group through the Lawrence County Area Agency on Aging. The group offers a light supper and child care to group participants at no cost. If a grandparent participant is 60 or over, the agency can provide therapeutic counseling and respite through the federally funded Family Caregiver Support Program. It also has a small private grant to help with some legal costs. *Contact:* Marjorie McKissick at (724) 658-3729.
- *Pinebrook Services for Children and Youth* provides kinship care services for families in the Lehigh Valley. The program offers family gatherings, a weekly newsletter, and educational training sessions for the caregivers. *Contact:* Kasy Bosco, Program Director, at (610) 432-3919 or childrenandyouth@pinebrookservices.org.
- *The Family and Community Service of Delaware County* runs a Second Time Around Parents program for grandparents taking care of their grandchildren and aims to build a stable and healthy relationship between grandparent and grandchild. The program offers bi-monthly support group meetings for relative caregivers as well as support groups for grandchildren between the ages of 5 and 12. Grandparents can also take advantage of parenting workshops, individual and family counseling, and a "Grandparent Stop-In Center" for less formal peer support. Second Time Around Parents also offers a drug and alcohol abuse prevention program for grand-children. In addition, community outreach, informal seminars, and recreational activities reach out to otherwise isolated grandparent caregivers. The program empowers grandparents to help themselves by advocating their rights and offers education in advocacy. You can also log on to their website at www.fcsdc.org. *Contact:* Marilou Coleman at (610) 566-7540 or mcoleman@fcsdc.org.
- *A Second Chance Inc. (ASCI)* is a non-profit corporation that works in cooperation with the office of Allegheny County Children, Youth & Families to provide a full range of kinship foster care, adoptive, and support services to Allegheny County children. Some of the agency's services include, but are not limited to EPSDT (medical screening), intensive kinship care training, crisis intervention, information and referral services, continuity of services, counseling and other support services. ASCI offers support group sessions, seminars and activities for youth, kinship foster parents, and birth families. It also has an after-school program for kids. The agency also operates a clothing bank. ASCI was the first program in the state to exclusively offer such services to kinship families through a private, not-for-profit entity. *Contact:* James Freeman, Vice President of Community and Clinical Services, at (412) 665-2300 or jamesf@asecondchance-kinship.com. The website is www.asecondchance-kinship.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 Pennsylvania, the Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth, and Families reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of September 2000, there were 21,191 children in out-of-home placements. Of these children, 3,556 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 approval policy for kinship foster parents. Kin have to meet the same approval standards and receive the same foster care payment rate as non-kin foster parents in their county.

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. Pennsylvania has established the Subsidized Permanent Legal Custodianship (SPLC) Program in several counties to provide financial assistance to eligible children living with family members and other kin who obtain permanent custody of them from Pennsylvania’s foster care system. Adoption and reunification with the parents must be ruled out before children are eligible for the program. *Contact:* TaWonda Jones-Williams, Fiscal Policy and Support Unit, Office of Children, Youth and Families, at (717) 787-5199 or tjoneswill@state.pa.us.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kin foster care should be directed to Kerin Kohler, Program Specialist, Office of Children, Youth and Families, at (717) 346-0445 or kkohler@state.pa.us.

Training and support for kinship foster parents: Anyone seeking to become a foster parent, including kinship caregivers, must participate annually in six hours of agency approved training. *Contact:* Kerin Kohler, Program Specialist, Office of Children, Youth and Families, at (717) 346-0445 or kkohler@state.pa.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 Pennsylvania Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) 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 the Welfare Helpline at (800) 692-7462 or log on to www.dpw.state.pa.us/LowInc/Cash/.

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 the Welfare Helpline at (800) 692-7462 or log on to www.dpw.state.pa.us/LowInc/FoodStamps.



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 Pennsylvania Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) 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) 692-7462 or log on to www.dpw.state.pa.us/LowInc/MedAssistance. For more information about CHIP, call (800) 986-KIDS, toll free in Pennsylvania, or log on to www.ins.state.pa.us/ins/.

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

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

Medical Consent (11 PA Cons. Stat. §§ 2511-2513): This law allows a child’s legal guardian/custodian to permit a relative or family friend to consent to medical, surgical, dental, developmental, mental health or other treatment for the

child.

Standby Guardianship (23 PA Cons. Stat. §§ 5601-5612): This law allows a parent or legal guardian to authorize a co-guardian to assume the care of the person or property for a child upon the parent’s incapacity, debilitation, or consent. A custodial parent or legal guardian may designate a standby guardian by means of written consent unless the child has another parent or adoptive parent: (1) whose parental rights have NOT been terminated or relinquished; (2) whose whereabouts are known; and (3) who is willing and able to carry out the day-to-day child-care decisions concerning the child.

¹*Laws 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	(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
Children’s Defense Fund	(202) 628-8787	www.childrensdefense.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.