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 South Carolina, there are 90,866 children living in grandparent-headed households (9.0% of all children in the state). There are another 21,178 children living in households headed by other relatives (2.1% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in South Carolina, 49,894 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 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/families/grandparents/.

* These data are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2. Profile Selected Social Characteristics: 2000.
**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:** Eve Barth, Intergenerational Coordinator, at (803) 734-9872 or barthe@aging.sc.gov.

- **Parents Anonymous** is a non-profit organization that offers support to parents and kinship caregivers. Parents Anonymous offers support groups for caregivers across the state, including relative caregivers. These groups also provide kinship care families with information on child development and discipline techniques and referrals to local resources. **Contact:** Sharron Dean, Program Director, at (843) 747-0480, (800) 326-8621 or sharrondean@bellsouth.net or log on to www.parentsanonymousofsouthcarolina.org.

- **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.

- **The Lieutenant Governor’s Office on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging, Councils on Aging and local community service providers** across the state provide support to family caregivers in South Carolina through the Family Caregiver Support Program. In South Carolina, 11 Family Caregiver Advocates are available to assist older grandparents and other relatives (60 and older) who are raising children (18 and younger). Receive one-on-one assistance and support, information about resources in your area, counseling, support groups, respite and other services, educational materials and caregiver tips, or the Grandparents Raising Children newsletter. **Contact:** Call (803) 734-9872 or log on to www.aging.sc.gov.

- **The South Carolina State Department of Education, Office of Parental and Community Partnerships** works to increase parental/caregiver involvement in the education of children, to increase parent/caregiver-teacher contacts, and to further engage communities in increasing parental/caregiver involvement in education. The office considers the term “parent” to include any and all adults who play an important role in a child’s life, since other adults, such as grandparents, may carry the primary responsibility for a child’s education, development, and well-being. Office staff can connect you with local school district employees who work with parental involvement activities. **Contact:** (803) 734-1122 or visit www.myschools.com/offices/parcom/.

- **Support groups** for grandparents raising grandchildren in South Carolina include:
  
  - Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Clarendon County – meeting location: Fleming/Felder Head Start – **Contact:** Kirkman Cedric or Dorothy Tindal at (803) 473-4575
  
  - Grandparents Raising Children, Beaufort – **Contact:** Lorain Tascoe-Bay at (843) 322-5414 or (803) 379-4689 or gcap@hargray.com or ltbey@hargray.com
  
  - Grandparents Raising Children, Catawba – **Contact:** Help Educate Loving Partners (803) 980-2406 or (803) 230-1814 or lizzy29704@aol.com
  
  - Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Columbia – **Contact:** Gloria Bullock, Edward E. Taylor Elementary School at (803) 343-2924
  
  - Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Kershaw County – meeting location: Antioch Head Start in Camden – **Contact:** Gertrude Spann or Lonnie Patterson at (803) 432-2823
• Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Lee County – meeting location: Bishopville Head Start in Bishopville – Contact: Hannah Hickman or Viola Sheilds at (803) 428-5240

• Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Sumter – meeting location: Rubye J. Johnson Head Start, Sumter – Contact: Brenda Dinkins-Hairston at (803) 773-1291.

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 July 2005, there were 5,121 children in out-of-home placements under Department’s care. Of these children, approximately 338 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 jkasufkin@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.dhhs.state.sc.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, all (803) 898-2500 or log on to www.dhhs.state.sc.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 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
Other Benefits: Other state and federal benefits may also be available to eligible children, such as childcare 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 children:

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.

Note: 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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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tr>
<td>AARP Grandparent Information Center</td>
<td>(888) 687-2277</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aarp.org/grandparents">www.aarp.org/grandparents</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adoption Information Clearinghouse</td>
<td>(888) 251-0075</td>
<td><a href="http://naic.acf.hhs.gov/">http://naic.acf.hhs.gov/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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) 289-3979</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gu.org">www.gu.org</a></td>
</tr>
<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>KINship Information Network</td>
<td>(772) 501-0502</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kinsupport.org">www.kinsupport.org</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 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.