



KANSAS

A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children



July 2006

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 Kansas, there are 29,026 children living in grandparent-headed households (4.1% of all children in the state). There are another 8,739 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.2 % of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Kansas, 16,184 are living there without either parent present.

The Grandparents

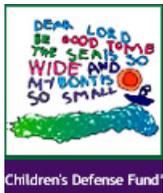
- Nationally, 2.4 million grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them: 29% of these grandparents are African American; 17% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3% are Asian; and 47% are White. 34% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 71% are under the age of 60; 19% live in poverty.
- In Kansas, 17,873 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [3,303 in Wichita and 2,210 in Kansas City]: 17% of these grandparents are African American; 11% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are Asian; 2% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; and 67% are White. 38% of these grand-parents live in households without the children's parents present. 75.6% are under the age of 60; 13.2% live in poverty.

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/cen2000/brief.html.
- Additional national and state data on grandparents raising children are available on AARP's website at www.aarp.org/grandparents

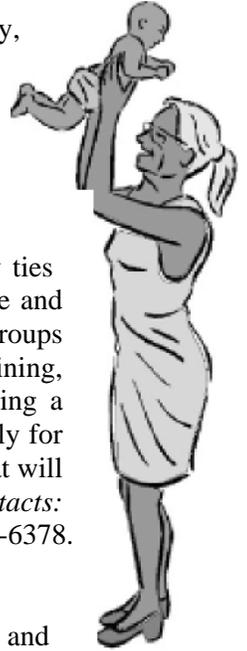
* These data are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2. Profile Selected Social Characteristics:2000.

The Brookdale Foundation



Programs That Can Help

- ***The Kansas Department of Aging*** offers information and assistance to grandparents and other older relatives raising children, including assistance in obtaining financial support and support group services. *Contact:* Marva Williams at (785) 291-3357 or marvawilliams@aging.state.ks.us or Sharon Dabzadeh at (785) 291-3806 or sharondabzadeh@aging.state.ks.us.
- ***Family Friends Grandparents as Parents Program*** at Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri provides support services to grandparents and other relative caregivers, including support groups, guidance and education by trained grandparents and professionals by telephone or in the home, links to community resources, access to programs for children and youth, parenting education and links to legal services. *Contact:* Alice Kitchen, Director of Social Work and Community Service, at (816) 234-3719 or akitche@cmh.edu.
- ***Kansas Children’s Service League (KCSL)*** is a statewide organization that helps maintain family ties during times of crisis by “placing children in need of care with loving and capable relatives” inside and outside the child welfare system. KCSL refers kinship care families to its network of support groups throughout the state and offers parenting education classes for relative caregivers, foster caregiver training, kinship care resource materials, and a crisis hotline. In addition, KCSL offers assistance in starting a kinship care support group, facilitates family group conferences, and helps kinship care families apply for financial and medical services. KCSL has also just established a new program, Kinship Navigator, that will assist caregivers in navigating and overcoming the barriers they may face when parenting again. *Contacts:* B.J. Gore at (316) 942-4261 or bjgore@kcsl.org. To reach the 24-hour Parent Helpline call (800) 332-6378. Log on to KCSL’s web site at www.kcsl.org.
- ***Caring and Sharing Grandparents, Inc.*** is an advocacy and support group in Hutchinson. Caring and Sharing provides numerous support groups on topics such as raising grandchildren, grandparents who have been denied visitation, and grandparents caring for children with special needs. Caring and Sharing offers parenting classes for grandparents and other relative caregivers and provides legal and counseling referral services, guest lectures, and an on-line support group. The group also offers advice on starting a support group in your local area. *Contact:* Judy Mitchell at (620) 663-4134 or grandmajem@cox.net.
- ***The Kansas Elder Law Hotline*** provides legal advice over the phone through the help of volunteer attorneys, regardless of the caller’s income. The Kansas Elder Law Hotline is a program administered through Kansas Legal Services, and helps seniors over the age of 60 determine if additional services are available to them. *Contact:* Elder Law Hotline at (888) 353-5337.
- ***KVC Behavioral HealthCare*** in Kansas City provides a monthly support group and an array of other services for grandparents and other relative caregivers, including case management, resource referrals, transportation assistance, education on permanency options, and an annual family conference. *Contact:* Jean Constantine, LCPC, Kinship Care Coordinator, at (913) 621-4641 (ext. 294) or jconstantine@kvc.org.



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 Kansas, the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services (SRS) reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of December 31, 2005, 5,186 children were in out-of-home placements under the Department’s supervision. Of these children, 1,289 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: Kin can care for children in the Kansas kinship foster care system in several ways. First, they

may be allowed to care for the child informally in the home. In these cases, the home must be checked by a state-affiliated agency. The agency will run a background check on the prospective caregiver and conduct a home walk-through. Kin may also be licensed as a foster parent. All foster parents must go through the same licensing assessment procedures, regardless of kinship ties, if they want to be approved as meeting licensing standards. Licensing is performed by The Bureau of Childcare and Health Facilities and regulation. Call Debi Hatfield at (785) 368-7015 or dhatfiel@kdhe.state.ks.us.

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. The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) provides funding for eligible children in the foster care system placed with a relative in an approved or licensed home who has established permanent guardianship. The subsidized guardianship program information is laid out in SRS's Program and Policy Manual, dated January 1999. Call or email Ruth Santner, Reintegration/Foster Care Program Manager, at (785) 368-8186 or raxs@srskansas.org.

State kinship care contact: The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) contracts with five private agencies with locations throughout the state that handle the permanency placements of the children in the foster care system: (1) The Farm, Inc. (Emporia); (2) KVC Behavioral Health Care (Kansas City); (3) Kansas Children's Service League (Wichita); (4) St. Francis Academy (Salina); and (5) United Methodist Youthville (Newton). The agencies assess placement options and those specific services that are needed to ensure a stable environment for the child. The agencies may provide counseling services, legal support, respite care, support groups, and other information and referrals for foster, kinship, and adoptive families. Call or email Tina Anthony, Kinship Care Consultant, at (785) 368-8171 or tra@srskansas.org.



Training and support for kinship foster parents: The Children's Alliance of Kansas was established in 1954 to help agencies better serve the children of Kansas and their families. The Alliance plays a pivotal role in facilitating the communication and coordination needed to have an effective continuum of coverage for the children and families of Kansas and now works with more than 20 member agencies to coordinate activities and programming. Member agencies serve children and families throughout the state. Services provided include advocacy, a network of emergency care services, training for foster and adoptive parents, foster care recruitment, and vocational rehabilitation services. Call Denise Gibson, Training Coordinator, at (785) 235-5437, dgibson@childally.org or log on to www.childally.org for more information.

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 Successful Families Program or Temporary Assistance for Families (TAF).

- 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 1-888-369-4777 or log on to www.srskansas.org/ISD/ees/successful_families.htm.

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 1-888-369-4777 or log on to www.srskansas.org/ISD/ees/successful_families.htm.

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 Kansas's Medicaid and Health *Wave* programs. In some cases, caregivers may also

be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for these programs, call 1-800-792-4884 or log on to www.kansashealthwave.org.

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 (Kan. Stat. Ann. § 38-136, 137): This law allows parents to sign a consent form authorizing a grandparent or relative caregiver, or other third party to obtain immunization on behalf of a child without obtaining legal custody or guardianship.

Standby Guardianship (Kan. Stat. Ann. § 59-3036): This law provides for temporary, emergency guardianship for a child. Where the court finds that there appears to be a threat to the health or safety of the child, a party may petition the court to have a standby guardian or conservator appointed for the child. The standby guardian will be able to exercise the same rights and responsibilities as the parent or legal guardian.

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	(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
Grandfamilies of America	(866) 272-3761	www.grandfamiliesofamerica.com
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

Fact sheets are updated annually. 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.