



MARYLAND

A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

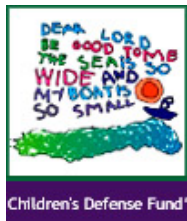


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The Brookdale
Foundation

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 Maryland, there are 98,836 children living in grandparent-headed households (7.3% of all children in the state). There are another 30,651 children living in households headed by other relatives (2.3% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Maryland 54,323 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 Maryland, 50,974 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [13,707 in Baltimore]: 56% of these grandparents are African American; 3% are Hispanic/Latino; 3% are Asian; and 36% are White. 34% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 69% are under the age of 60; 14% 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/briefs.html.
- Additional national and state data on grandparents raising children is 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.



Programs That Can Help

- *The Kinship Care Resource Center of Maryland* provides information, referrals, and support services for Maryland kinship care families through a central data bank. The Kinship Care Resource Center assists caregivers and the organizations that serve them in developing support groups and other services. It also identifies the most pressing needs and concerns of kinship caregivers by maintaining kinship care information and statistics for legislators and other policy makers. *Contact:* Dr. Earlene Merrill at (410) 951-4177 or (888) 951-4177 or emerrill@coppin.edu. The website is www.coppin.edu/kinshipcare/resource_resource.html.
- *The Maryland Department of Human Resources, Social Services Administration, Kinship Care Program* supports new and existing kinship care support groups throughout the state. These support groups offer an array of services and activities for adults and children. The program also offers a quarterly newsletter, *Kinship Care Connections*, and a website at www.dhr.state.md.us/chldprnt.kinshiphtm. The same information can be obtained by phone. *Contact:* Karen M. Powell at (410) 767-7788 or kpowell@dhr.state.md.us.
- *The Grandparents Resource Directory* was developed by the Maryland Department of Human Resources and the Department of Aging to provide information about social services, support groups, educational programs, legal services, child care, health services, and recreational activities. *Contact:* Log on to www.mdoa.state.md.us/gpintro.html.
- *The Progressive Life Center Kinship Care Program* is designed to provide counseling and supportive services to families caring for relative children in Prince George's County and surrounding areas. The goal of the program is to assist families and caregivers in reducing dependence and involvement on public assistance by linking them to community resources and referrals. The Program offers regular visits with a caseworker, spiritually- and culturally-focused case management, parent support groups, family team meetings, youth groups, and respite care. It also provides psychiatric consultation, mental health services, 24-hour crisis intervention and information and referrals. *Contact:* Evette Clarke, Project Director, at (301) 773-1701 or evette@ntuplc.org. The website is www.ntuplc.org.
- *Grandparents as Parents of Howard County* meets monthly to discuss various issues affecting kinship care families, such as behavior and discipline problems, communication with parents, and legal options. GAP also provides children's activities while the grandparents are meeting. *Contact:* Debbie Yare at (410) 313-1940 or dyare@howardcountymd.gov.
- *Baltimore Grandfamilies of Communities of Care of Maryland* provides a range of services and supports for grandparents and other relatives raising children in the Baltimore area. Services include support groups, a database of local services, telephone referrals, a regular newsletter, and conferences, workshops and other trainings for grandparenting professionals. *Contact:* Duane St. Clair at (410) 381-4788 or duanestclair@excite.com. The website is www.baltimoregrandfamilies.org.
- *The Baltimore County Department of Aging* in partnership with the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks, the Weinberg Foundation, Senior Citizens, Inc. and other local organizations offers summer camp opportunities for grandparents and other relatives raising children in the Baltimore County area. *Contact:* Yvonne Yentsch, Program Coordinator, at (410) 887-2970 or yyentsch@baltimorecountymd.gov. The website is www.takingcareofmomanddad.net.
- *The Family Tree* provides family education and support to grandparents and other relatives who are caring for children in the Baltimore metropolitan area. Guest speakers are invited to provide information on specific topics such as financial assistance, advocacy, adoption, and substance abuse. *Contact:* Carolyn Finney, Director of Programs and Services, at (410) 889-2300 or carolynfinney@familytreemd.org. The website is www.familytreemd.org.
- *Grandparents Supporting Grandparents* is a support group sponsored by Baltimore County Department of Social Services for grandparents and other relative caregivers who are raising children in the Baltimore Country area. The monthly meetings provide an opportunity for kinship caregivers to discuss common problems and share their experiences. Through guest speakers, information is provided on various topics related to concerns identified by the



participants. *Contact:* Ann Abramson at (410) 853-3888 or aabramson@dhr.state.md.us; Marty Zimmerman at (410) 853-3903 or mzimmerm@dhr.state.md.us.

- ***Family Matters Grandparents & Other Relative Caregivers Support Group at Light, Health & Wellness*** provides monthly educational and support meetings for grandparents and other relatives who are caring for children. Guest speakers are invited to provide information on specific topics such as financial assistance, advocacy, adoption, and substance abuse. Child care is provided during support group meetings. Family Matters has three sites: Johnson Square Day Care, Cherry Hill, and Westport Academy. *Contact:* Sharon McKinley, Deputy Director, at (410) 235-3220 or shamckinley@aol.com.
- ***Solutions for Children and Caregivers of Maryland*** provides a range of services for grandparents and other relatives raising children. These include support groups, legal referrals, and state advocacy for new laws that help grandfamilies. The organization helps grandfamilies across the state of Maryland. It also provides a 24/7 warm-line at (301) 898-8023. *Contact:* Pat Owens, Executive Director, at (301) 898-8023 or owenspat@aol.com.
- ***Frederick County Department of Aging*** provides GRACE (Grandparents and Caring Efforts), a support group for grandparents and other relatives raising children. In addition to support groups, GRACE also provides a database of local services, information and referrals by telephone, and other support services. *Contact:* Mindy Lohman-Hinz, Caregiver Program Coordinator, at (301) 694-1605 or mlohman@fredco-md.net. The website is <http://www.co.frederick.md.us/daa>.
- ***MAC Incorporated's (Area Agency on Aging) Relatives as Parents Program*** offers monthly meetings, advocacy, and information and referrals to grandparents and other relatives who are caring for their kin in the Eastern Shore area. *Contact:* Helen Johnson at (410) 742-0505 or hljl@macinc.org. The website is www.macinc.org.
- ***Catholic Charities-Seton Center Relatives as Parents Program*** provides community-based supportive services, advocacy, information, and resources to grandparents and other relatives responsible for the primary care of children in Somerset County. As a rural community/neighborhood center, Catholic Charities has been providing direct service, outreach and advocacy through a variety of programs. The goal of the program is to support and strengthen relative caregiver families through partnerships with other agencies. *Contact:* Sister Diane Moore at (410) 651-9608 or setoncenter@comcast.net.
- ***Rockville Senior Center's Grandparents to the Rescue*** is a support group that provides monthly educational and support meetings to grandparents and other relatives who are caring for children. Guest speakers are invited to provide information on specific topics such as financial assistance, advocacy, adoption, and substance abuse. *Contact:* Lorraine Schack, Coordinator at (240) 314-8810 or lschack@rockvillemd.gov. The website is <http://rockvillemd.gov>.

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 Maryland, the Department of Human Resources, Social Services Administration, reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of July 2006, there were 8,000 children in out-of-home placements. Of these children, 1,755 are committed to local departments in formal kinship care placements.

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. The relative caregiver must provide a safe environment for the child and meet all the state’s child protection standards.

Kinship care licensing: Relative caregivers in Maryland can participate in the Kinship Care Program or become licensed as foster parents in the “restricted foster care” program. All kinship caregivers must go through a formal approval process, which includes child abuse and neglect clearance, health and sanitation check of the home, and the fingerprinting of all adults in the home. Caregivers must be able to provide a safe environment for the child and meet all the state’s child



protection standards. If relative caregivers are licensed as foster parents, they must adhere to the same licensing and training requirements and receive the same foster care payment rate as non-relative 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. Maryland no longer has a subsidized guardianship program but has continued its support of children who formerly participated in the federally-funded subsidized guardianship demonstration project.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship care should be directed to Karen M. Powell, Policy Analyst, Department of Human Resources, Social Services Administration, at (410) 767-7788 or kpowell@dhr.state.md.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 Maryland Family Investment - Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) 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) 332-6347 or log on to www.dhr.sailorsite.net/how/cashfood/tca.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 (800) 332-6347 or log on to www.dhr.sailorsite.net/how/cashfood/fstamp.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 the Maryland Medicaid and Maryland’s Children Health Program. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for both programs, call (800) 456-8900 or log on to www.dhr.sailorsite.net/how/medical/mchip.htm.

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 and Educational Consent (Md. Code Ann. [Educ.] §7-101) and Md. Code Ann. [Health-Gen] §20-105(b)): These laws allow, respectively, for a grandparent or other relative providing “informal kinship care” to complete an affidavit that allows them to consent to health care on behalf of a child. The affidavit also explicitly provides that relatives providing care may apply for medical and public assistance entitlements for which the child is eligible. The educational consent bill provides that an informal kinship caregiver may enroll the child in the school district where the caregiver lives. The public funding used to pay for that child’s education follows the child from the parent’s school district to the new one.

Standby Guardianship (Md. Est. & Trusts Code Ann. §§ 13-903 and 13-904): This law allows a parent to file a petition for the judicial appointment of a standby guardian of a minor to care for the child in the event of the parent’s incapacity or



death. The authority of the standby guardian becomes effective upon the incapacity or death of the minor's parent.

Relative Notification by Child Welfare Agency (not yet codified - HB935): mandates the notification of grandparents and certain other relatives within a stipulated period of time after a child comes into state custody; requires efforts to locate and place the child with qualified relatives before an alternative foster care placement is made; enforces documentation of reasonable efforts for the courts regarding such searches.

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
Child Welfare Information Gateway	(800) 394-3366	http://www.childwelfare.gov
The Brookdale Foundation	(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.org
KINship Information Network	(772) 501-0502	www.kinsupport.org
National Committee of Grandparents For Children's Rights	(866) 624-9900	www.grandparentsforchildren.org
National Eldercare Locator	(800) 677-1116	www.eldercare.gov

Fact sheets are updated annually. Changes or additions should be e-mailed to the AARP Grandparent Information Center at gic@arp.org. Please write "State Fact Sheets" on your e-mail subject line.

