

# GrandFacts

State fact sheets for grandparents and other relatives raising children

AARP, The Brookdale Foundation Group, Casey Family Programs, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, and Generations United have partnered to produce state and national **GrandFacts** fact sheets for grandparents and other relatives raising children. The state fact sheets include state-specific data and programs as well as information about foster care, public benefits, educational assistance and state laws. Visit [www.grandfactsheets.org](http://www.grandfactsheets.org) to find this and all **GrandFacts** state fact sheets.

## Alaska

### The Children

- 16,189 children under age 18 live in homes where the householders are grandparents or other relatives (8.7% of all children under 18 in Alaska.) (U.S. 2010 Census)
  - Of these, 12,131 live with grandparents who are the householders (6.5% of the children in the state) and 4,058 live with other relatives who are the householders (2.2% of the children in the state). (U.S. 2010 Census)
- 6,109 children live in homes with grandparent householders where grandparents are responsible for them\*
  - Of these children, 1,958 have no parents present in the home.\*

### The Grandparents\*

- 6,367 grandparents are the householders and are responsible for their grandchildren living with them. Of these:
  - 40% of the grandparents are White and not Hispanic, 4% are Black/African American, 4% are Asian, 44% are American Indian and Alaska Native, and 3% are Hispanic/Latino, and may be of any race.
  - 33% have no parents of the children present in the home.
  - 59% are under age 60.
  - 12% live in poverty.\*\*
- 1,598 grandparents in Anchorage Municipality are the householders and are responsible for their grandchildren living with them.

\*Comparable data are not currently available for homes where other relatives are the householders.

\*\*100% of poverty level.

Data not specifically cited are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Detailed Table B09006 and Subject Tables S1001 and S1002. Additional data on related topics and sub-state areas can be found on the Census Bureau website at <http://factfinder.census.gov>

## Programs That Can Help

Local programs that provide support, resources and assistance to grandfamilies can often be found by contacting your local school, area agency on aging, community center, faith-based organization or children's services office.

**The AARP GrandCare Support Locator** is a free online service where programs can self-list their services and resources. Search by your city, state or zip code. [www.giclocalsupport.org](http://www.giclocalsupport.org)

## Key Programs in Alaska

### **Alaska Center for Resource Families/Alaska Adoption Support Center – Alaska Office of Children's Services**

**Phone:** 907-279-1799 or 1-866-478-7307 (toll-free)  
**Website:** [www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org)  
**Service Area:** Statewide - offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat-Su/Palmer, Juneau  
**Description:** Resources, training, recruitment, support group and family activities, and Relative Core Training

### **Grandfamilies Network Project – Volunteers of America Alaska**

**Contact:** Linda Price  
**Phone:** 888-522-9866 or 907-522-9866 (Anchorage)  
**Email:** [grands@voaak.org](mailto:grands@voaak.org)  
**Website:** [www.voaak.org](http://www.voaak.org)  
**Service Area:** Statewide  
**Description:** Respite care, winter and summer camps, support groups, information and assistance, case management, short term counseling, and referrals;  
Powerful Families – Casey Family courses in financial literacy and advocacy

## Children in Foster Care

- Sometimes state child welfare agencies place children in foster care with grandparents or other relatives. This is often called "kinship care."
- Federal law requires states to notify all known relatives within 30 days of children's removal from their parents.

### **Alaska in 2010:**

- 1,874 children in out-of-home placements under the supervision of the Alaska Office of Children's Services (OCS)
- 588 of these children were placed with relatives.
- 159 children were on trial home visits with 10 children in pre-adoptive homes with relatives.

### **Placement Policies**

- Alaska law requires that kinship care be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought for an abused or neglected child.

## Subsidized Guardianship

- Alaska program provides subsidies to relative and non-relative guardians of children who are in state custody at the time guardianship plan is written.
- Subsidy may be awarded if recommended by the OCS Permanency Planning Conference Team, family has approved guardianship study and child meets other criteria.
- Contact Alaska Center for Resource Families/Alaska Adoption Support Center (see above).
- For more Information [www.hss.state.ak.us/ocs/Adoptions/aboutGuardianship.htm](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/ocs/Adoptions/aboutGuardianship.htm)

## Alaska Foster Care and Relative/Kinship Care Contact

**Office of Children's Services**, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services,  
KariLee Pietz, Social Service Program Officer, 907-465-2145 or 907-465-3209  
[karilee.pietz@alaska.gov](mailto:karilee.pietz@alaska.gov)  
[www.hss.state.ak.us/ocs](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/ocs)

## Public Benefits

Federal and state public benefits programs can help with income, food, healthcare, home energy, telephone and other needs for those who are eligible. Eligibility requirements vary with each public benefit and sometimes are different from state to state. Some benefits are for the family and others are for children or older adults individually. Children are often eligible for public benefits even if their caregivers do not have legal guardianship or custody. Grandparents may become eligible for benefits programs when their household size increases.

## Help with Public Benefits

### AARP Foundation's [Benefits QuickLINK](http://www.aarp.org/quicklink)

A free and private way to find out if relatives or the children they are raising qualify for programs that pay for food, increase income and cover home and healthcare costs (listed below). It gives quick results, application forms and the address and phone number of the closest office.

[www.aarp.org/quicklink](http://www.aarp.org/quicklink)

#### Public Benefits for Older Americans:\*

- Medicare Savings Programs
- Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage
- Medicare Rx Extra Help
- State Pharmaceutical Assistance programs (SPAP)
- Medicaid for Aged, Blind, and Disabled
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
- State Property Tax Relief/Rebates
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Telephone Assistance (Link-Up and Lifeline)

#### Public Benefits for Families Raising Children\*

- Medicaid for Children
- State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)
- TANF-Child Only Grants
- Supplemental Security Income for Children

\*Some of these programs may have age and income restrictions.

## Eldercare Locator

The National Eldercare Locator service helps you find your local area agency on aging and other state and local resources that can help with public benefits, local programs and other services for older adults.

1-800-677-1116 (toll-free)

[www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov)

## Key Public Benefits

### Income

Each state administers federal funds that provide cash assistance to families in need. Some states also offer other forms of financial assistance.

#### Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

Cash assistance may be available to eligible children and their relative caregivers.

##### Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP)

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

907-465-3347

[www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/atap](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/atap)

### Social Security

A multigenerational program, Social Security provides income benefits to adults, older adults and children. In addition to [Retirement](#) and [Disability](#) benefits, [Survivor's Benefits](#) are based on a child's parent's earnings and may help if a child's parents die. The [Supplemental Security Income](#) (SSI) program pays benefits to disabled [adults](#) and [children](#) who have limited income and resources. SSI benefits are also payable to people 65 and older without disabilities who meet the financial limits.

[Online Directory](#) – To find your local Social Security Administration office.

1-800-772-1213 (toll-free)

[www.socialsecurity.gov/locator](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/locator)

### Nutrition

Relative caregivers and their families may be eligible for assistance with groceries, meals, infant formula and nutrition education. These are some of the key nutrition benefits programs and resources.

#### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program. It helps low-income individuals and families buy the food they need for good health. Although SNAP is the national name, your state may use a different name.

##### Alaska Food Stamps Program

Alaska Department of Health and Human Services

907-465-3347

[www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/fstamps](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/fstamps)

#### Food and Nutrition Services of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- **Child Nutrition Program** - The schools, early childhood education programs, child care centers, afterschool programs or other programs that children attend may offer free or reduced meals through the federal Child Nutrition Program, which provides breakfast, lunch, snacks, summer meals and milk. Contact the school or program to ask if they participate in any of the child nutrition programs and ask how to apply. Relative caregivers should inform the program that they are raising the child and whether or not they are doing so through a court order.

[Online State Directory](#) - To find your state office that manages the Child Nutrition program.

[www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm)

- **Women, Infant and Children (WIC)** - States administer federal funds for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

**Online State Directory** - To find your state office that manages the WIC program.  
[www.fns.usda.gov/wic/Contacts/statealpha.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/Contacts/statealpha.htm)

**Foodbanks** - Organizations that provide free food and sometimes other items, such as diapers to families in need. **Feeding America** is an organization that fights hunger and has a food bank locator.

**Online State Directory** - To find local food banks.  
1-800-771-2303 (toll-free)  
[www.feedingamerica.org/foodbank-results.aspx](http://www.feedingamerica.org/foodbank-results.aspx)

## Health Care

Relative caregivers and the children they are raising may be eligible for health insurance and help with prescription drugs. **Benefits QuickLINK** can help you find these benefits.

### Health Insurance for Children

Relative caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health and dental insurance for the children they are raising through the federal Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Although CHIP is the national name, your state may use a different name.

#### **Denali KidCare**

Alaska Department of Health and Human Services  
1- 888-318-8890 (toll-free) or 907-269-6529 (Anchorage)  
[www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/dkc](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/dkc)

## Education

- **U.S. Department of Education** - Offers a **Parent Site** that has a wide range of helpful information for parents *and* caregivers regarding children's education from early childhood through college, special needs, disabilities, language challenges and gifted students.  
1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327 – toll-free)  
[www.ed.gov/parents](http://www.ed.gov/parents)
- **State Department of Education** - Relative caregivers may find helpful information about the education of children they are raising.

#### **Alaska Department of Education and Early Development**

907-465-2800  
[www.eed.state.ak.us](http://www.eed.state.ak.us)

## Educational Enrollment

Relative caregivers can contact their local school district's administrative office or their local school to find out how to register the child and what paperwork is needed. Caregivers may need birth records, health records or previous school records. Some states have laws that allow relative caregivers to enroll children they are raising in school. These laws are often called "education consent" laws, but may be called something else in your state.

#### **Grandfamilies State Law and Policy Resource Center**

**Online Directory** - To find out if your state has an education consent law.  
[www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org)

## Early Intervention, Special Education and Related Services

### What you need to know:

- **The Federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)** - From birth to age 21, children who have learning disabilities, physical disabilities or other special needs may be able to get special early intervention, preschool and special education services in school through the federal IDEA. Services may include speech, physical, and occupational therapies.
- **Child Find** – A part of the IDEA that requires states to identify, locate and evaluate children in the areas of cognitive and physical functioning, hearing and vision, speech and language and social and emotional development as early as possible. Once the Child Find evaluation team, which includes a child's caregivers, has decided if a child is eligible for early intervention or preschool special education services, an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP; birth to three years of age) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP; three to five years of age) is developed and services begin shortly at no cost.

### Where to find help for children with special needs:

- **Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Special Education**  
(907) 465-2972  
[www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/sped](http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/sped)
- **The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities** guides caregivers to organizations and resources in each state and offers both English and Spanish language information.
  - **Online State Directory** – To find state and other disability organizations in your state.  
1-800-695-0285 (toll-free)  
[www.nichcy.org/pages/statespecificinfo.aspx](http://www.nichcy.org/pages/statespecificinfo.aspx)
- **Parent Centers** across the country provide information to help parents *and* caregivers with children who have special education needs and disabilities.
  - **Online State Directory** – To find Parent Centers in your state.  
National Parent Technical Assistance Center 1-888-248-0822 (toll-free)  
[www.parentcenternetwork.org/parentcenterlisting](http://www.parentcenternetwork.org/parentcenterlisting)

## Early Childhood Education

- **Head Start** and **Early Head Start** – Early education programs for eligible children.
  - **Online Directory** – To find Head Start or Early Head Start centers in your state.  
1-866-763-6481 (toll-free)  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices>
- **The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)** - Information, resources and connection to local Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (CCR&R) that help you find local child care through the Child Care Aware program.
  - **Online Directory** – To find your local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency.  
1-800-424-2246 (toll-free)  
[www.childcareaware.org/parents-and-guardians](http://www.childcareaware.org/parents-and-guardians)

## Educational Activities

**Verizon Thinkfinity** - Support a child's success in school with fun learning activities and interactive games you can do together using this free online resource.

[www.thinkfinity.org](http://www.thinkfinity.org)

## State Laws

### Grandfamilies State Law and Policy Resource Center

Provides an up-to-date online listing of state laws, policies and legislation that affect grandfamilies. A collaboration between [Casey Family Programs](#), the [American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law](#) and [Generations United](#), the website includes a searchable database of current laws and pending legislation by state, including:

- Adoption
- Care and Custody
- Education
- Financial Assistance
- Housing
- Kinship Navigator Programs
- Medical
- National Family Caregivers Support Programs
- Relative Foster Care
- Subsidized Guardianship
- Notification of Relatives

**Online Directory** – To find your state's laws affecting grandfamilies.  
[www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org)

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## GrandFacts Updates

If you have an update or a resource to be included in this or any of the other GrandFacts fact sheets, please visit [www.grandfactsheets.org](http://www.grandfactsheets.org) to submit updates or email [grandfacts@aarp.org](mailto:grandfacts@aarp.org). Fact sheets are updated regularly.

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**GrandFacts State Fact Sheets for Grandparents and other Relatives Raising Children are funded in part by the [AARP Foundation](#) and [Verizon Thinkfinity](#).**

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