

# GrandFacts

## A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

Connecticut

October 2007

The AARP Foundation, The Brookdale Foundation Group, Casey Family Programs, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, and Generations United have partnered to produce fact sheets for grandparents and other relatives raising children that include state-specific data, programs, and public policies. This and other state fact sheets can be viewed and printed from the website at [www.grandfactsheets.org](http://www.grandfactsheets.org). Fact sheets are updated annually. Updates can be sent directly from the website via email. Please write "State Fact Sheets" on your e-mail subject line.

### In Connecticut....

- There are 39,797 children living in grandparent-headed households (4.7% of all children in the state). There are another 12,406 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.5 % of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Connecticut, 21,123 are living there without either parent present.
- 18,898 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [2,157 in Hartford and 1,757 in Bridgeport]: 29% of these grandparents are African American; 19% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are Asian; and 47% are White. 34% of these grand-parents live in households without the children's parents present. 69% are under the age of 60; 16.5% live in poverty.
- Additional data on grandparents raising children are available from the United States Census at <http://factfinder.census.gov> or <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/phc-t17.html>

### Programs That Can Help

#### Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)

**Sponsoring Organization:** National Family Caregiver Support Program of the Older Americans Act administered with the Connecticut Department of Social Services, Aging Services Division

**Contact:** North Central Area Agency on Aging

**Phone:** 860-724-6443

**Web:** [www.ncaaact.org](http://www.ncaaact.org)



## Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) – cont.

**Contact:** Southwestern Connecticut Area Agency on Aging  
**Phone:** 203-333-9288  
**Web:** [www.swcaa.org](http://www.swcaa.org)  
**Contact:** Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging  
**Phone:** 203-757-5449  
**Web:** [www.wcaaa.org](http://www.wcaaa.org)  
**Contact:** South Central Connecticut Area Agency on Aging  
**Phone:** 203-785-8533  
**Web:** [www.agencyonaging-scc.org](http://www.agencyonaging-scc.org)  
**Contact:** Senior Resources of Eastern Connecticut  
**Phone:** 860-887-3561  
**Web:** [www.seniorresourcesec.org](http://www.seniorresourcesec.org)  
**Service area:** Statewide  
**Services offered:**

- Services to grandparent caregiver families administered by Area Agencies on Aging

## Connecticut Department of Social Services – Aging Services Division

**Contact:** Roberta Gould, Caregiver Support Coordinator  
**Phone:** 860-424-5199  
**Email:** [Roberta.Gould@ct.gov](mailto:Roberta.Gould@ct.gov)  
**Web:** <http://www.ct.gov/agingservices>  
**Service area:** Statewide  
**Services offered:**

- Grandparent Programs – monthly educational programs, counseling, case management, information/referral
- Grandparents as Parents (GAPS) network with more than 100 agencies offering services to grandfamilies (<http://www.ct.gov/agingservices/cwp/view.asp?a=2513&q=313054>)

## City of Hartford Health and Human Services Department

**Contact:** Elby Gonzalez-Schwapp, Program Manager  
**Phone:** 860-547-1426 x 7572  
**Email:** [egonazalezschwapp@hartford.gov](mailto:egonazalezschwapp@hartford.gov)  
**Service area:** Hartford  
**Services offered:**

- Grandparent Programs – monthly educational programs, counseling, case management, information/referral
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Commission – advises city on policy issues
- Kinship Navigator telephone line to provide information/referral
- Hartford Grandfamilies Housing Initiative – wraparound services and youth programming for grandparents and grandchildren
- Grandparents Day Family Fair held annually

## Connecticut Grandparent Caregiver Support Groups

**Sponsoring Organization:** Multiple  
**Service Area:** Statewide  
**Web:**  
<http://www.ct.gov/agingservices/lib/agingservices/pdf/ctgrandparentcaregiversupportgroups091307.pdf>

## Connecticut Kinship Navigator

**Sponsoring Organization:** State of Connecticut, Connecticut United Ways  
**Phone:** Dial 2-1-1 anywhere in Connecticut to locate local services  
**Web:** <http://www.211ct.org/> (See “Kinship Care” lower right corner)

## Connecticut Legal Services

**Contact:** Astrid Lebron, Director of Development  
**Phone:** 860-344-0447 x 113  
**Email:** [alebron@connlegalservices.org](mailto:alebron@connlegalservices.org)  
**Service area:** Statewide with offices in Bridgeport, New Britain, Middletown, New London, Stamford, Waterbury, Willimantic

### Services offered:

- Legal representation and advice to eligible kinship care families on family, housing, public benefits, special education, consumer and elder law

## Consultation Center of New Haven

**Contact:** Sallie Spignesi, Coordinator of Grandparent Programs  
**Phone:** 203-789-7645  
**Email:** [sspignesi@theconsultationcenter.org](mailto:sspignesi@theconsultationcenter.org)  
**Web:** [www.theconsultationcenter.org](http://www.theconsultationcenter.org)  
**Service Area:** New Haven

### Services Offered:

- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Program – evening and morning groups
- Grandparent Respite Activity Support Program (G.R.A.S.P.)
- Parenting classes
- Promotes legislative changes to support kinship care families
- *GrandNews* newsletter

## Danbury Regional Child Advocacy Center

**Contact:** Danielle DiMauro  
**Phone:** 203-748-4542  
**Email:** [drcaevmp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:drcaevmp@sbcglobal.net)  
**Service area:** Danbury

### Services offered:

- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support groups with child care, speakers
- Volunteer Mentor Program to match mentors with families in the community to provide support and assistance

## Grandparents Raising Grandchildren – Bridgeport

<b>Sponsoring Organization:</b>	Child Guidance Center of Greater Bridgeport, City of Bridgeport Social Services Department
<b>Contact:</b>	Suzanne Wallace
<b>Phone:</b>	203-394-6529 x 3025
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:swallace@cgcgb.org">swallace@cgcgb.org</a>
<b>Service area:</b>	Bridgeport and surrounding area
<b>Services offered:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support group meetings (dinner and child care provided)</li><li>• Parenting the Second Time Around programs on discipline, self-esteem, communication and encouragement; child care and supper provided</li></ul>

## Grandparent's Connection – Meriden

<b>Sponsoring Organization:</b>	Meriden Health Department
<b>Contact:</b>	Julianna Johnson
<b>Phone:</b>	203-630-4244
<b>Service area:</b>	Meriden
<b>Services offered:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legal assistance to elderly citizens (age 60 and over) whose income is below 125% of poverty level</li><li>• Legal advice on guardianship, custody issues</li><li>• Se habla Español</li></ul>

## Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.

<b>Phone:</b>	860-541-5000
<b>Service area:</b>	Hartford area
<b>Services offered:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legal assistance to elderly citizens (age 60 and over) whose income is below 125% of poverty level</li><li>• Legal advice on guardianship, custody issues</li><li>• Se habla Español</li></ul>

## New Haven Board of Education Social Development Department

<b>Contact:</b>	Carolyn Jackson
<b>Phone:</b>	203-946-7444
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:carolynojackson@yahoo.com">carolynojackson@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Service area:</b>	New Haven
<b>Services offered:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grandparents on the Move support group meets at Clinton Avenue School</li><li>• Information/referral</li></ul>

## Salvation Army Community Services Department

**Contact:** Brenda Downing, Director of Community Services Department  
**Phone:** 860-543-8413 ext 110  
**Email:** [brenda\\_downing@use.salvationarmy.org](mailto:brenda_downing@use.salvationarmy.org)  
**Contact:** Lois Ross, Grandparent Advocate  
**Phone:** 860-543-8413  
**Email:** [Lois\\_P\\_Ross@use.salvationarmy.org](mailto:Lois_P_Ross@use.salvationarmy.org)  
**Service area:** Greater Hartford  
**Services offered:**

- Parents the Second Time Around Program
- Support groups, educational workshops, counseling, case management, youth services
- Monthly newsletter
- Legislative advocacy for subsidized guardianships

## Village Grandparents Support Group

**Contact:** Doris Little  
**Phone:** 203-407-3172  
**Email:** [doris.little@uconn.edu](mailto:doris.little@uconn.edu)  
**Service area:** New Haven  
**Services offered:**

- Monthly support group

## Children in Foster Care

### Numbers – November 2007

- 5,900 children in out-of-home placements under the supervision of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF).
- 1,300 of these children were placed with relatives.

### Preferences

- State policy requires that kin be considered first for out-of-home placements.
- There is no separate licensing program for kinship foster parents. Training requirement may be waived on case by case basis.
- Kin and non-kin foster parents receive same foster care payment rate.

### Contacts

- Foster Care – Dina Kelly, Social Work Supervisor
  - Phone: 860-550-6322
  - Email: [blandina.kelly@ct.gov](mailto:blandina.kelly@ct.gov)

## Subsidized guardianship

- Connecticut Department of Children and Families has a subsidized guardianship program for children who are in the custody of the child welfare system and in the care of a relative for at least six months. Eligible children may receive a monthly subsidy, health benefits and a one-time expense payment of up to \$500. As of November 2006, there were 1,630 children in subsidized guardianship arrangements in Connecticut.
- Contact Sandra Matlack, Program Supervisor
  - Phone: 860-550-6392
  - Email: [sandra.matlack@po.state.ct.us](mailto:sandra.matlack@po.state.ct.us)

## Training and support

- Relative caregivers are expected to receive 15 hours of pre-licensing training; they are encouraged to attend post-licensing training.
- Each relative has an assigned DCF Support Worker if the child is under DCF supervision
- Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents (CAFAP) provides additional services
  - Contact: Jean Fiorito
  - Phone: 860-258-3400
  - Email: [jean.fiorito@cafap.com](mailto:jean.fiorito@cafap.com)
  - Web: [www.cafap.com](http://www.cafap.com)

## Public Benefits

Children are often eligible for state and federal benefits even if their caregivers do not have legal guardianship or custody. The following public benefits programs are offered in Connecticut.

## Financial Assistance

- Cash assistance may be available to children and their relative caregivers through the Safety Net program.
  - Phone: 1-800-842-1508
  - Web: [www.dss.state.ct.us/welfare.htm](http://www.dss.state.ct.us/welfare.htm) (Click “Families and Children on the left)

## Food Stamps

- Kinship care families may be eligible for food stamps.
  - Phone: 860-560-2100
  - Web: <http://www.ctfoodstamps.org/>

## Health Insurance

- Relative caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health insurance through Connecticut HUSKY program
  - Phone: 1-877-CT-HUSKY (1-877-284-8759)
  - Web: [www.huskyhealth.com](http://www.huskyhealth.com)

## Benefits QuickLINK

- Screens you and/or the children you are raising for 15 major public benefits for older adults and families with children
  - Web: [www.aarp.org/quicklink](http://www.aarp.org/quicklink)

## Other Benefits – child care, disabilities, special education, older adult benefits, etc.

- Children’s Defense Fund benefit guides for grandparents and other relatives for information about state and federal benefits
  - Phone: 202-662-3568
  - Web: [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org) (Kinship Care Resource Kit)
- National Council on Aging – Benefits CheckUp [www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org)

## State Laws

*Laws change and are subject to different interpretations. These general descriptions are not intended as legal advice in any particular situation.*

### **Educational Consent** (Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-253)

- Children living with relatives and non-relatives receive the same educational services as all other children in a school district. The school district may require documentation that the child’s residence with a relative is not for the sole purpose of obtaining an education.”

### **Standby Guardianship** (Conn. Gen. Ann. § 45a-624)

- A parent or guardian may name a standby person to take over the care of a child if and when a parent becomes mentally incapacitated or debilitated or dies.

### **Kinship Foster Care Program** (Public Act No. 03-423; Senate Bill #291)

- Establishes Kinship Foster Program to that when child is placed with a relative for foster care, the relative is informed about licensing procedures.

### **Kinship Navigator Program** (Public Act No. 06-182)

- Requires the Department of Children and Families to establish a kinship navigator program to help caregivers find services and become foster parents.

### **Notification** (Public Act 06-37)

- Requires the Department of Children and Families to use best efforts to identify and notify the grandparents of a child removed from home not later than 15 days after removal.

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## LEGISLATION PROPOSED IN JANUARY 2007 (NEXT SESSION JANUARY 2008)

- **House Bill 5393** seeks to expand eligibility for subsidized guardianships to children who are not in state custody and who live with relative caregivers whose income is at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level
- **House Bills 5442, 5648, 6032 and Senate Bills 129, 139, 199, 754, 757** seek to provide the same subsidies for relative caregivers whether or not children are in state custody
- **Senate Bill 138** seeks to exclude a relative caregiver’s child care subsidies from income eligibility for

programs such as temporary family assistance and food stamps

- **House Bill 5841** seeks to increase state funding of the free and reduced lunch program to include children who are in the custody of grandparents or foster grandparents
- **Senate Bill 576** seeks to permit grandchildren of residents age 55 and older to live with them in elderly housing

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