

GrandFacts

A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

Florida

November 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. 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 Florida....

- 258,952 children live in grandparent-headed households (7.1% of all the children in the state). There are another 86,152 children living in households headed by other relatives (2.4% of all the children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Florida, 151,492 are living there without either parent present.
- 147,893 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them (8,695 in Jacksonville and 4,810 in Miami) 35% of these grandparents are African American; 19% are Hispanic/Latino; 1% are Asian; 43% are White. 35% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 69% are under the age of 60; 18% 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

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast

Contact: Joy Mahler, CEO
Phone: 941-488-4009
Email: jmahler@bbbssun.org
Web: <http://www.bbbssun.org/>
Service area: Sarasota, Manatee, Desoto, Highland, Hardee Counties
Services offered:

- One-to-one mentoring for children



Easter Seals South Florida, Inc.

Contact: Angela Aracena
Phone: 305-547-4721
Email: aaracena@SFL.easterseals.com
Web: www.southflorida.easterseals.com
Service area: Miami
Services offered:

- Sitter services in the home for relative caregivers (day, night, overnight)
- On-site child care

Florida Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Web: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FloridaGRG/>
Service area: Statewide
Services offered:

- Online resource center addressing health, lifestyle changes, child care, etc.

Florida Kinship Center

Sponsoring Organization: University of South Florida School of Social Work
Phone: 813-974-1328
Warmline: 800-640-6444
Email: kinfo@flkin.org
Web: www.flkin.org
Service area: Statewide
Services offered:

- Kinship Care Warmline - emotional support, information/referral; available 8am-4pm Monday-Friday
- Quarterly newsletter
- Training to service providers and caregivers
- Maintains Florida Kinship Community Collaborative and Florida Kinship Support Group Network
- Kinship Care Connection – support services for children; connects caregivers with school system
- Kin as Teachers – home-visit program to support kinship caregivers
- Kinship Navigator program to connect caregivers with resources and services in Hillsborough County - xjacobs@cas.usf.edu
- Legal Hotline – information via Warmline on permanency options

Florida Legal Services, Inc. - FLS

Phone: 850-385-7900
Web: www.floridalegal.org
Service area: Statewide
Services offered:

- Legal support center that provides technical consultation to ensure that people with low incomes (including relative caregivers) have access to legal services

Grandparents Parenting Again of Flagler County

Sponsoring Organization: Santa Maria del Mar and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Churches
Contact: Dolores and Deacon Mike Moody
Phone: 386-447-0044
Email: dmjmoody3@cfl.rr.com
Service area: Palm Coast
Services offered:

- Information on professional legal advice, resources, parking skills
- Counseling
- Supervised child care during grandparent meetings

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group

Contact: Saliha Nelson, V.P. Operations at Urgent, Inc.
Phone: 305-576-3084 or 305-576-1789
Email: snelson@urgentinc.org
Web: www.urgentinc.org
Service area: Miami - Communities of Overton, Coconut Grove, Liberty City, Model City
Services offered:

- Monthly support group addressing parenting, peer support, community building, education, advocacy
- Girls Academy: Rites of Passage Intergenerational Project to reduce caregiver stress and provide knowledge about parenting skills

Intergenerational Community Assistance Network – I-CAN

Sponsoring Organization: Informed Families/Florida Family Partnership
Contact: Christine Stilwell
Phone: 321-213-0587
Email: cstilwell@informedfamilies.org
Web: <http://www.informedfamilies.org/>
Service area: Central Florida
Services offered:

- Support groups/educational workshops
- Resource library
- Home visits
- Family bonding activities and grandparent socials
- Babysitting and self-esteem workshops provided for children during adult meetings

Kinship Care Family Resources

Sponsoring Organization: Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc. and Florida Department of Elder Affairs.
Contact: Adriana Soto
Phone: 727-550-4250
Email: asoto@family-resources.org
Web: http://www.family-resources.org/asp/programs_kinship.asp
Service area: Pinellas and Pasco Counties

Kinship Care Family Resources (cont.)

Services offered:

- Support groups in St Petersburg, Largo, Dunedin, New Port Richey, Dade City. Clearwater/Dunedin
- Permanency planning
- Educational workshops
- Transportation and respite services for relative caregivers over the age of 60
- Limited home visits and case management focused on preventing the need for foster care
- Legal assistance
- Outings and fun family events
- Se habla Español

Kinship Services Network (KSN) of Pinellas

Sponsoring Organization:

Children's Home, Inc., Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Pinellas County, Catholic Charities Diocese of St. Petersburg (funded by Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County)

Contact:

Larry Cooper, LCSW, The Children's Home

Phone:

813-864-1420

Intake phone:

727-466-9478 (to apply for services)

Email:

lcooper@tampachi.org

Website:

www.childrenshome.org

Service area:

Pinellas County

Services offered:

- Information/referral
- Case management and mentoring
- Support groups for youth and adults
- Educational workshops

Relative Caregiver Foundation, Inc.

Contact:

Kim Weise

Address:

P.O. Box 274 Bell, FL 32619

Phone:

352-535-7748

Email:

rcaregiv@aol.com

Web:

www.caregiverfoundation.com

Service area:

Statewide information; based in Bell, Florida

Services offered:

- Confidential support group
- Assists relatives in understanding their rights as caregivers
- Information on legal issues, state funding, medical/dental/mental health resources, educational issues, parenting and coping skills, mediation with parents

Relatives as Parents Program – Marion County

Sponsoring Organization: Marion County Public Library

Contact: Gerry Brent, Library Community Liaison

Address: 2720 East Silver Springs Blvd, Ocala, FL 34470

Phone: 352-368-4507

Email: Gerry.brent@marioncountyfl.org

Service area: Ocala

Services offered:

- Support groups/educational workshops

Relatives as Parents Program - Ocala

Sponsoring Organization: Kids Central, Inc.

Contact: Debra Wise, Client Rights/Ombudsman

Address: 2117 SW Highway 484, Ocala, FL 34473

Phone: 352-873-6332 x 3419

Email:

Web:

Service area: Ocala

Services offered:

- Support groups/educational workshops

Children in Foster Care

State child welfare agencies sometimes place children in foster care with grandparents or other relatives. Most state agencies call these placements “kinship care.”

Numbers – July 2006

- 29, 725 children in out-of-home placements under the supervision of the Florida Department of Children and Families
- 15,570 of these children were placed with relatives; of these, 13,975 were in the Relative Caregiver Program (see below).

Preferences

- State policy requires that kinship care be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought for a child in the care of the state.

Kinship care licensing

- Relatives must meet the same licensing standards and requirements and receive the same foster care payment rate as non-kin foster parents.
- Contact Linda D. Johns, Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Safety
 - Phone: 850-414-9982
 - Email: Linda_D_Johns@dcf.state.fl.us

Subsidized guardianship

- Florida does not have a subsidized guardianship program.

Public Benefits

Children are often eligible for state and federal benefits even if their caregivers do not have legal guardianship or custody.

Financial Assistance

- Cash assistance may be available to children and their relative caregivers through Florida's Temporary Cash Assistance Program.
 - Phone: 866-762-2237
 - Web: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/ess/tanf.shtml>
- Relative Caregiver Program - Monthly financial support to relatives who have custody of a child under age 18 placed in their home by the Department of Children and Families. The monthly payment is more than the Temporary Cash Assistance for one child, but less than the amount paid for a foster care child. Payments are based on the child's age and any countable income. Monthly payments for children with no countable income are as follows:
 - Age 0 through 5 - \$242 per child
 - Age 6 through 12 - \$249 per child
 - Age 13 through 17 - \$298 per child
- Web: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/ess/tanf.shtml>

Food Stamps

- Kinship care families may be eligible for food stamps.
 - Phone: 866-762-2237
 - Web: www.myflorida.com/accessflorida

Health Insurance

- Relative caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health insurance through Florida's KidCare program.
 - Phone: 888-540-KIDS (5437)
 - Web: www.floridakidcare.org

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

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 (Kinship Care Resource Kit)
- National Council on Aging – Benefits CheckUp 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.

Medical Consent (FL Stat. ch. 743.0645)

- Allows relative to consent to medical care on behalf of a child after provider has made reasonable attempt to contact parent or guardian and if the parent or guardian has not given notice that they oppose the treatment.

Standby Guardianship (FL Stat. ch. 744.304)

- Allows guardian to be temporarily appointed by the court with consent of the parents. Standby guardian assumes duties upon death or incapacitation of last surviving parent.

Relative Caregiver Program (FL Stat.ch. 39.5085)

- Eligibility requirements for the Relative Caregiver Program, which provides financial assistance to kinship caregivers

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