

GrandFacts

A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

Maine
January 2008

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. Fact sheets are updated annually. Updates can be sent to gic@aarp.org. This and other state fact sheets can be viewed and printed from www.grandfactsheets.org. Please write "State Fact Sheets" on your e-mail subject line.

In Maine...

- 9,276 children live in grandparent-headed households (3.1% of all the children in the state). There are another 2,078 children living in households headed by other relatives (.7% of all the children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Maine, 4,326 are living there without either parent present.
- 5,074 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them (257 in Portland): 1% of these grandparents are African American; 1% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 2% are Asian; and 93% are White. 51% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 71% are under the age of 60; 15% 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

Kinship Families Support Group

Sponsoring Organization: Families CAN! Midcoast Maine Community Action
Contact: Marie T. Arnold, Program Coordinator
Phone: 207-442-7963 x 213
Email: marie.t.arnold@maine.gov
Service area: Bath and surrounding area
Services offered:

- Information/referral
- In-person support
- Group meetings (child care provided with theme-based activities)



Maine Area Agencies on Aging & the Bureau of Elder and Adult Services

Contact: Bureau of Elder and Adult Services
Phone: 800-262-2232
Web: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/beas/resource/aaa.htm>
Service area: Statewide (area offices listed online)
Services offered:

- Information and resources for adults 60 and older

Maine Association of Child Abuse and Neglect Councils

Contact: Staci Fortunato, Executive Director
Phone: 207-626-3428
Email: augusta@familiesfirstcan.org
Service area: Kennebec County
Services offered:

- Information to all parents and caregivers

Maine Kids-Kin

Sponsoring Organization: Families and Children Together
Contact: Janelle Wuoristo
Phone: 866-298-0896
Email: jwuoristo@mainekids-kin.org
Web: www.mainekids-kin.org
Service area: Statewide
Services offered:

- Information/referral
- Individual case management
- Assistance managing legal, financial, family, mental health, child care, respite issues
- Extensive lending library
- Funds for respite care
- Clothing exchange
- Support and activity groups throughout the state

Relatives as Parent Program Task Force

Sponsoring Organization: University of Maine Center on Aging and School of Social Work
Contact: Dr. Lenard W. Kaye
Phone: 207-262-7920
Email: len.kaye@umit.maine.edu
Web: www.umaine.edu/mainecenteronaging
Service area: Statewide
Services offered:

- Facilitates collaboration among child welfare, aging and other human service organizations to address mental health and support needs of older adults in kinship care roles
- *Supporting Maine Families: Recommendations from Maine's Relatives as Parents Project* available at www.umaine.edu/mainecenteronaging (see "Publications" on left)

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 – January 2008

- 2,176 children in out-of-home placements under the supervision of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Child and Family Services

Preferences

- State law and policy require that kinship care be considered first when an out-of-home placement is sought for a child under the Department’s care.

Kinship care licensing and training

- No separate licensing for kinship foster parents.
- Same licensing standards and training requirements as non-kin foster parents. While kin are strongly encouraged to participate in fundamental training, the training requirement may be waived for kin who will be providing care for a child with whom the kin has an already established relationship.
- Same foster care payment rate. Eligible kin may be reimbursed for caring for children under the Department’s custody prior to becoming formally licensed, as long as basic health and safety standards are met.
- In-house kinship care specialists in all offices of the Maine Bureau of Child and Family Services provide support to children in kinship placements.
 - Contact: Linda Brissette
 - Phone: 207-624-7964
 - Email: Linda.Brissette@maine.gov
 - Contact: Barbara Kates, Families and Children Together
 - Address: 304 Hancock St, Suite 2B, Bangor, Maine 04401
 - Phone: 207-941-2347
 - Email: info@familiesandchildren.org
 - Web: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/bcfs/kinship.htm>
- Department of Health and Human Services provides foster care and adoption training through the Maine Child Welfare Training Institute.
 - Phone: 207-626-5200
 - Web: www.cwti.org

Subsidized guardianship

- Maine recently received approval for a waiver (or special exception) from the federal government to implement a subsidized guardianship program for eligible children for whom adoption or reunification is not appropriate.

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 the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program
 - Phone: 207-287-2826
 - Web: www.state.me.us/dhhs/OIAS/

Food Stamps

- Kinship care families may be eligible for food stamps.
 - Phone: 207-287-2826
 - Web: www.state.me.us/dhhs/OIAS/

Health Insurance

- Relative caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health insurance through MaineCare
 - Phone: 1-800-321-5557
 - Web: www.maine.gov/dhhs/bms/index.shtml

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.

Limited Guardianship

ME REV. STAT. ANN. Tit. 18-A, § 5-105

- Allows courts to grant limited guardianship whereby guardian takes custody of the child but does not have full range of authority; court determines exact nature of guardianship relationship.

De Facto Guardianship

ME REV. STAT. ANN. tit. 18-A, § 5, Parts One and Two

- Allows caregivers to be considered a “de facto” legal guardian if child has lived with the caregiver for a certain period of time. Court may appoint caregiver as guardian in certain circumstances.

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