

# GrandFacts

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

Minnesota

September 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 Minnesota...

- There are 33,975 children living in grandparent-headed households (2.6% of all the children in the state). There are another 14,008 children living in households headed by other relatives (1.1% of all the children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Minnesota, 19,053 are living there without either parent present.
- 17,682 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [2,250 grandparents in Minneapolis and 1,514 in St Paul]: 10% of these grandparents are African American; 6% are Hispanic/Latino; 5% are Asian; 7% are American Indian or Alaskan Native and 70% are White. 34% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present; 76% are under the age of 60; 10% 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

#### Minnesota Kinship Caregivers Association (MKCA)

**Contact:** Sharon Durken, Acting Executive Director  
**Phone:** 651-917-4642  
**Email:** [Sharon@mcka.org](mailto:Sharon@mcka.org)  
**Web:** [www.mkca.org](http://www.mkca.org)  
**Service area:** Statewide through six Regional Service Agencies



## Minnesota Kinship Caregivers Association (MKCA) – cont.

### Services offered:

- Advocacy and public awareness of kinship issues
- Education and support services to address emotional and behavior issues
- Information/referral for legal, financial and health services
- Minnesota Grand Kin Navigator Program
- Board of Directors includes over 50% grandparents/relatives raising children
- Legal and general resource manuals available online, including *First Steps: Getting Started Raising Relatives' Children*
  - **Northeast - Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging AEOA-ROCK Program**
    - Teresa Harvey 800-662-5711 or 218-748-7354 [tharvey@AEOA.com](mailto:tharvey@AEOA.com)
    - *Counties served:* Koohciching, Itasca, St. Louis, Lake, Cook, Aitkin, Carlton, Crow Wing, Morrison, Mille Lacs, Kanabec, Pine
  - **Northwest - Mahube Community Council, Inc. Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP) -**
    - Bonnie DeVore 218-732-7204 [bdevore@mahube.org](mailto:bdevore@mahube.org)
    - *Counties served:* Kittson, Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Beltrami, Polk, Pennington, Red Lake, Clearwater, Norman, Mahnomen, Clay, Becker, Hubbard, Wilkin, Otter Tail, Cass, Wadena, Todd
  - **Southwest - Child Care Choices**
    - Cystal Hoernemann 800-228-8549 x 18 or [choernemann@childcarechoices.net](mailto:choernemann@childcarechoices.net)
    - *Counties served:* Grant, Douglas, Traverse, Stevens, Pope, Stearns, Benton, Sherburne, Wright, Big Stone, Swift, Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, Renville, Chippewa, Lac Qui Parle, Yellow Medicine, Lincoln, Lyon, Redwood, Pipestone, Murray, Cottonwood, Rock, Nobles, Jackson
  - **Southeast - Grandparents, Parenting Again, Child Care Resource & Referral –**
    - The Grandparent Program 1-800-462-1660
    - *Counties served:* Nicollet, Le Sueur, Brown, Watonwan, Blue Earth, Waseca, Martin, Faribault, Rice, Goodhue, Wabasha, Steele, Dodge, Olmsted, Winona, Freeborn, Mower, Fillmore, Houston
  - **Metro Area - GrandFamily Connection**
    - Linda Hammersten 612-879-5307 [Linda.Hammersten@lssmn.org](mailto:Linda.Hammersten@lssmn.org)
    - Mary Wilkening 612-879-5351 [Mary.Wilkening@lssmn.org](mailto:Mary.Wilkening@lssmn.org)
    - Web: [www.lssmn.org/grandfamilies](http://www.lssmn.org/grandfamilies)
    - *Counties served:* Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington, Isasnti, Chisago
    - Services offered: Individual consultation, recreational activities, winter and fall retreats, online resource manuals, mental health initiative, newsletter
  - **6 Northern Reservations - Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Area Agency on Aging**
    - Vera Brown 1-888-231-7886 [vbrown@mnchippewatribe.org](mailto:vbrown@mnchippewatribe.org)
    - Brenda Rice 1-888-231-7886 [brice@mnchippewatribe.org](mailto:brice@mnchippewatribe.org)
    - *Reservations served:* Bois Forte, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, White Earth, Mille Lacs, Fond du Lac

## Grandkidsandme

Contact:

Don Schmitz

**Phone:** 651-695-1988  
**Email:** [don@grandkidsandme.com](mailto:don@grandkidsandme.com)  
**Web:** <http://www.grandkidsandme.com/>  
**Service area:** Statewide  
**Services offered:**

- Grandkidsandme Grandparent Camps
- Publications, including electronic newsletter *The Gathering*
- Speaking and writing

## Raising our Children's Kids (ROCK)

**Sponsoring Organization:** Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, Inc.  
**Contact:** Marcia Mehle  
**Phone:** 218-748-7354  
**Email:** [mmehle@aeoa.org](mailto:mmehle@aeoa.org)  
**Web:** [www.aeoa.org/rock.htm](http://www.aeoa.org/rock.htm)  
**Service area:** Northern St Louis County  
**Services offered:**

- Educational/networking meetings for kinship care families and professionals
- Peer counseling network
- Information, crisis assistance
- Family-oriented recreational activities
- Referral to youth development opportunities
- Quarterly newsletter

## Children in Foster Care

### Numbers – December 2004

- 6,955 children in out-of-home placements under the supervision of the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Children's Services, Foster Care Division.
- 1,668 of these children were placed with relatives.

### Preferences

- State policy requires that kin be considered first for out-of-home placements.
- There are no separate licensing programs for kinship caregivers. They must meet the same requirements and receive the same payment as non-kin.

### Subsidized guardianship

- Relative Custody Assistance – ongoing permanency assistance payment to eligible children whose relative caregivers become their legal guardians. Adoption or return to natural parent must be ruled out before child is eligible for this program.

### Contacts:

- Deborah Beske-Brown, Foster Care Program Consultant, Dept of Human Services, Family & Children's Services Division

- Phone: 651-431-4731
- Email: [deborah.beske.brown@state.mn.us](mailto:deborah.beske.brown@state.mn.us)
- Paulette Lonzo, Program Advisor for Adoption Assistance/Relative Custody Assistance
  - Email: [Paulette.Lonzo@state.mn.us](mailto:Paulette.Lonzo@state.mn.us)

## Online resources

- [www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us) (Click “Children” and “Foster Care”)
  - *Family Matters: information for relatives considering becoming foster parents*
  - *Relative Custody Assistance* (help for people who accept custody of a child through juvenile court)

## 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 Minnesota:

## Financial Assistance

- Cash assistance may be available to children and their relative caregivers through the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
  - Contact: 651-431-2670 or 800-657-3739 (Ask for your local county agency)
  - Web: [www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us) (Click on “Child support” on alphabetical list, left column)

## Food Stamps

- Kinship care families may be eligible for food stamps.
  - Contact: 800-657-3739
  - Web: [www.dhr.state.mn.us](http://www.dhr.state.mn.us) (Click on “Food support” on alphabetical list, left column)

## Health Insurance

- Relative caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health insurance through Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare
  - Contact: 615-431-2670 – Twin Cities; 800-657-3739 elsewhere
  - Web: [www.dhs.state.mn.us/hlthcare](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/hlthcare)

## 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
  - Contact: 202-662-3568
  - Web: [www.childrendefense.org](http://www.childrendefense.org) (Kinship Care Resource Kit)
- National Council on Aging – Benefits CheckUp [www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org)

## State Laws

### Standby Guardianship

- Allows designation of standby or alternate custodian of a child in the event of death or incapacity

### De Facto Custodian

- Third parties who have full-time care of a child have same standing in court as parents when certain criteria are met
- Information in Legal Steps Manual on MCKA Web site [www.mkca.org](http://www.mkca.org)

### **Disclaimer:**

*None of the sponsoring organizations whose logos appear on this fact sheet (AARP Foundation, Brookdale Foundation Group, Casey Family Programs, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, or Generations United) recommends or endorses any of the groups, agencies or services listed within the fact sheet. Neither the sponsoring organizations nor any of their employees make any warranty, expressed or implied, or assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information. None of the sponsoring organizations shall have liability to any fact sheet user or to any third party for any loss expense, or damage, including consequential, incidental, special or punitive damages. A user's sole and exclusive remedy for dissatisfaction with this fact sheet is to cease using the fact sheet. Please be advised that there may be other similar services available that are not listed on this fact sheet. The sponsoring organizations are not obligated to include any specific groups, agencies or services and may choose not to include some that submit their information. The sponsoring organizations are not responsible for consumer interactions with groups, agencies or services listed on these fact sheets.*